Religion and Society

letin of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion & Society

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OF RELIGION

Theme:

CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH OTHER FAITHS

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l. VI, No. 3
ctober 1959

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EDITORIAL

ELSEWHERE in these pages appears an account of the first Institute of Hinduism held during August, in co-operation with the United Theological College, Bangalore. In addition to the resident students in the College, the Y.M.C.A. Training School and the Missionary Language School, twenty-five presbyters, both Indian and non-Indian, attended. This has been an encouragement, and it is proposed to extend this service of CISRS to other areas as well. In furthering this programme we hope to secure the help of theological institutions.

In order that the lectures given at the Bangalore Institute might reach a wider circle, we have reproduced some of them in this issue. Dr. Devasenapathi's lucid exposition of the fundamentals of South Indian Saivism is a timely reminder of the persistent influence of theistic schools of thought in Hindu religious history, right down to the present times. The common assumption that theological thinking in Hindu India has tended to favour a monistic mysticism fails to reckon with the periodic protests theistic faith voiced from time to time by Vaishnavite and Saivite reformers. Equating Hinduism with Advaita Vedanta is the result of misreading the history of *sanatana dharma*.

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It is true that certain postulates of belief held in common both by Hindu theists and monists, in regard to the origin of this world of men, the ordering of their lives, and their ultimate destiny, have prevented the independent development of theistic schools of thought from the standpoint of theological theory. Beginning with the nineteenth century modern theistic movements have expressed dissent from the Vedanta concept of the Impersonal Brahman. But in their later history they became involved in militant social reform, on the one hand, and in reactionary religious nationalism, on the other, so that no serious thinking was done on basic theological issues. The tremendous gains secured in the reform of such social evils as child marriage, enforced widowhood, and the caste system were in great measure due to the efforts of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj. Similarly the later history of the Arya Samaj indicates how the dynamic of religious patriotism reinforced the Arya plea of *sanghatan, shuddhi,* and *Hindutva,* and led to

dogmatic developments which are better described as reactionary rather than reformatory.

One reason for these deviations was that none of these theistic movements claimed to be based on the classical theistic schools of either Saivism or Vaishnavism. Another reason is that the high-powered organization of the Ramakrishna Mission of which Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan writes elsewhere in these pages outstripped the feeble theological thinking of the theistic samajas. Moreover, it proclaimed the Vedanta message of the ultimate reality of the "formless" Brahman with the comforting assurance that there was also a place for theistic worship of the Eternal Brahman in his many 'forms' in temporal existence. Also, of still more recent times, the claim is put forward that there is no difference at all between the two theistic sects of Vaishnavism and Saivism. This claim is refuted today by both as a misrepresentation of the Hindu principle of tolerance. *Samadarshana* is one thing, and *sarva samaya samarasa* is another thing altogether, they pointedly argue.

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This is the burden of the passionate plea set forth in forceful language in a Tamil booklet published by Sri. S. Krishnasvami Iyengar of Trichinopoly.[1] "Of late", he writes, "another ideal of religious equality is nurtured by nationalists. That is: 'All religions are one and the same. All of them basically agree. So all of us should discard differences of caste and religion and adhere to this religion of love.' The main purpose of this essay is to show that this *samarasa* teaching can be productive of evil in our country, leading to the growth of secularism (*nastika*) and making people lose faith altogether". Writing a Foreword in English to this pamphlet, in his forthright manner, Dr. R. Nagaraja Sarma states, "Religion and philosophy are not mere theoretical doctrinaire pursuits. They have to be lived. Religious life is a life of prayer and devotion. When you pray, you must have a clear and distinct idea of the nature and characteristics of the form of the Deity you worship and pray. If all gods and deities are One, what may be the nature of the God one may visualize during meditation? Would it be some religio-philosophical homogeneous mass of spiritual protoplasm like cosmic or super-cosmic amœba? Different deities

[1] Available from the author, 3 Puthur Agraharam, Trichinopoly.

and gods and goddesses for worship by all as perfect realities must be admitted. Of these Siva and Vishnu have throughout the ages contended for supremacy. Secondly, it must be admitted that Vishnu is absolutely supreme. In Hindu religion these two conclusions can never be denied or refuted by any thinker, howsoever great he may be".

Our intention in quoting this passage at length is to draw attention to the movements of resurgence within Hinduism of theistic sects, which in part is due to the contemporary teaching of *sarva samaya samarasam*, the essential sameness (equality) of all religions. It is significant that Dr. Nagaraja Sarma calls it "a disturbing and dangerous crisis in Vaishnava theology and Vaishnava theism". But there are also other reasons of which we need to take account. One is the prevailing tendency to revive the classical literature in the regional languages. And this is not only true of the renewed interest in Tamil, though it must be admitted that the treasured sacred literature of both Saivism and Vaishnavism are found in Tamil classics. It also applies to other languages such as Bengali and Marathi which possess a wealth of religious poetry which would rank high in the world's best devotional literature. Another reason is the current involvement in world history with which Dr. Stanley Samartha ably deals in his scholarly contribution to this number of *Religion and Society*. He has attempted to show "that certain features of modern Hindu thought as represented by some of its major thinkers point in the direction of a possible view of history which is still in the making". Such a view of history, if it is to be adequate, Dr. Samartha concludes, "adequate to provide man with hope and the assurance of fulfilment" would need to re-examine its religious resources and categories concerning "creation, judgment and grace" as well as "the healing fact and the redemptive activity of God".

This lecture we have published is one of two addresses which Dr. Samartha delivered at the Institute. We have produced them together in the form of a pamphlet in the CISRS series.[2] In view of the obvious interest evinced in the significant happenings of world-life, and to the extent that we are compelled, as a people, to participate in these events with a sense of responsibility,—"to change, reorder and transmute the causal sequences of nature", and thereby *make* history—Hindu

[2] Available from the CISRS Office, 19 Miller Road, Bangalore-1.

religious thought will find itself confronted by the need to elaborate a distinctive philosophy of history worthy of its spiritual genius. The classical Hindu understanding, Dr. Samartha pointed out in his first lecture, is of a cyclical movement, "a process of deterioration leading to the inescapable destruction of world eras according to predetermined principles.....The cyclical nature of the process discounts the possibility of eschatological direction and goal Man's highest duty, therefore, is through self-effort and by the grace of God, to emancipate himself from the cycles of history so that he may finally reach the eternal solitude and the silent stillness of the Supreme, Who is above and beyond history".

* * * * * *

There is no doubt that theistic sects in Hinduism have from the beginning stressed the doctrine of grace. But the cosmic character of the divine purpose in creation and its final fulfilment at the end of the time are however not regarded as significant aspects of divine grace—of grace as redemptively active in the world order. Dr. R. Panikkar's exegesis of a relevant Vedānta Sutra text of Badarayana brings the resources of Christian insight to interpret this great truth as implicit in Hindu thought. So that any theistic theology at all, if it is to be worthwhile, should not rest satisfied with the concept of Īśvara, of God within quotation marks ("God"), as a necessary concession to the empirical religious needs of men who have not come to a true knowledge of themselves. Dr. Panikkar suggests that "many of mankind's philosophical and theological texts contain a '*sensus plenior*', a fuller sense. We must refrain from rejecting a text or a tradition—the contrary attitude has been proved fatal—simply because it does not accord with our already crystallised ideas or formulations. Only when we have arrived at the '*res significata*', the intended thing, have we the right to exercise a pure critique. Only then too can we reach a higher synthesis. This synthesis would utilise new and old elements—*nova et vetera*—letting what is superfluous fall by the wayside".

If theism is to have final and absolute validity for human faith, we must have the assurance that God and man can be fully reconciled, and made one in a fellowship of love and peace. For that assurance the Eternal should be involved in time, and God's purpose realized in the very process of creation. Only

then the disorderliness caused by human wilfulness in this earthly order can be overcome, and an orderliness effected in human affairs, so that the complex of history is in fact a fulfilment of the divine plan for mankind. Such a demonstration in history and such an experience of it in one's own life can alone liberate man for new beginnings and create in him new powers. Only in the context of such a conviction, all renascence of religion becomes meaningful. The idea that God may be willing to accomplish this end is not enough if it remains only an idea. The symbol of Siva's blue throat, for instance, is such an idea, whereas the Cross of Christ is a 'scandal' because it is an event in history. Inevitably, if there be no historical core to this conviction, it will fail to hold men permanently or to strengthen them for action. It would leave theism as it has so largely been in India, no more than a philosophy which seeks to establish a realistic view of the world and of the God of human devotion. Speaking for the Christian, Nicol Macnicol points out, "Hope and unwearying activity can be built only on a sure foundation of work accomplished in the midst of time by the very God of grace Himself. For that reason the theism which has this accredited fact at its centre, and in which the fact renews itself as a present experience of divine power in the hearts of men, is assured of a place of primacy among all the faiths that seek to bring together God and man, and to establish the Kingdom of Heaven which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit". Ultimately the one single commentary on this Sutra text, as Dr. Panikkar maintains, in concluding his discussion is: "That from which this world comes forth and to which it returns and by which it is sustained, *that* is Christ."

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We have reproduced Rev. George Appleton's article which appeared in a recent number of our British contemporary, *Frontier*,[3] because what he has said about *Christian Encounter with Other Religions* is of challenging relevance to our readers. Perhaps the word 'encounter' which is currently employed in Christian circles—along with such terms as 'confrontation' and 'approach'—does not fully express the understanding concern which is increasingly characteristic of Christian thinkers in our

[3] Edited by John Lawrence, 59 Bryanston Street, Marble Arch, London W. 1.

day in the surging, new life manifest in other religions, especially in Asian lands. What is implied is an earnest desire to cross over the traditionally accepted boundaries of beliefs and practices which divide the fraternity of those who sincerely seek to understand and fulfil God's will for the world of man, and to get to know each other. Undoubtedly this represents a new spirit among Christians which results in a different attitude on their part towards people of other faiths. The time is surely come "when Christians and men of other faiths can meet together to explain to each other their ultimate words, to compare their own religious experience, to cross-examine each other in free and genuine encounter and to see where this encounter leads them".

To illustrate this new temper we have added in this number two review articles by Ian Douglas and John Carman on a recent book, *The Call of the Minaret*. The author, Canon Kenneth Cragg, is a well-known Christian scholar in Islamics who regards the Christian obligations of "awareness, witness and concern", born of the Christian understanding of truth, as not rivalry but relevance. Speaking with pointed reference to contemporary Islam, he insists that the Christian "must learn to be in some measure the participant. As the bearer of 'the Word made flesh', he must strive to enter into the daily existence of Muslims, as believers, adherents and men". What Cragg pleads for is a willingness to enter into a personal relationship with men of other religious convictions with a view to understand how profoundly their convictions affect their whole life. From the time William Carey reached Serampore, over a century and half of close contact of Christian Missions with the Hindu people there has been a tendency to think of evangelism more as a call to teach them Christianity rather than to listen to what they have to say for themselves. It may be that this was because quite early in missionary history the evangelist directed all his efforts to the simpler folk of the outcaste villages whose needs, material and spiritual, called for immediate attention. Moreover, work among them proved more fruitful and encouraging. This aspect of the Christian's responsibility may not be neglected even now, although conditions have changed considerably within this century. At the same time, what was begun, even in the days of Carey, by such pioneers as Alexander Duff, John Wilson and William Miller should not be abandoned. As John Carman observes in his

review of Kenneth Cragg's book, our good relations with the intellectuals of other faiths in India are "on a very superficial level : beneath the surface is a heavy layer of indifference and unconcern". There can be no other call more urgent in our day to Christians everywhere in the world than that they enter into an intimate dialogue of faith with those who hold to other faiths, "being always ready with an *apologia* for every one who asks of you a reason concerning the hope which is in you, but with gentleness and due deference" (1 Peter iii. 15). To quote Kenneth Cragg, "We are called to a tender solicitude for the minds and wills of men. The Word which is Christ has to come into their vocabulary. So we must study what they mean, in all the moods, the overtones and undertones of their existence. It is our life-task to make bridges into their minds. This means being near enough to be heard"—and near enough to speak.

ĪŚVARA AND CHRIST AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM[1]

By Dr. R. Panikkar

Any serious attempt at dialogue between Christianity and any other form of life or religion or metaphysics must take into account the basic Christian conception of the Absolute as Trinity. And this holds also for any pure philosophical dialogue, claiming to deal with ultimate problems in which a Christian position is involved.

We would like to summarize here the results of a long study[2] regarding one *particular* point of a much more general problem. We could formulate our thesis like this: The *place* made in Vedānta for Īśvara, *i.e.*, the postulation of Īśvara for a rôle which the philosophical mind finds necessary in order to explain the world and connect God and the World, without compromising the Absoluteness of the former and the Relativity of the latter, that place is filled by Christ in Christian *Philosophy. In so far* as Christ can be intelligible to Indian Philosophy, as such, it is there that He may find an introductory place. To *start* with the historicity of Christ—important as it is—is to be doomed to a radical misunderstanding, not only because the whole Christian conception of history is likely to be misunderstood by Indian thought if we follow such a method but also because the Christian conception of history comes *a posteriori* to the Incarnation. I mean to say that the Christian idea of history—necessary for the proper understanding of the historical fact of Christ—presupposes or implies already the Christian idea of Christ. Further, the primary Christian *philosophical* explanation does not begin with the "Flesh", but with the "Logos" that became "Flesh". Most *philosophical* misunderstandings about Christ and the Incarnation from the side of Indian Philosophy would disappear, if, first of all, Christian Philosophy tried to speak of Christ in a way that might make sense for the other partner in the dialogue.

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[1] A summary of this article was sent to the XII International Congress of Philosophy, Venice, 1958, and will be published in its proceedings.

[2] *God and the World according to Brahmasūtra, I, 1, 2,* (which will appear briefly).

God and the World, according to Advaita Vedānta—and the conception is perfectly Christian—are not *two*. (Two instances of *what* ? This "what" would be higher than the Absolute !). They are not *one* either (the absolute identity would not permit any difference whatsoever). Only the negation of any dualism (*dvaita*) without falling into monism (*aikya*) can give an account of the reality of an Absolute that does not swallow up the Relative, or of a Relative that does not make the Absolute superfluous.[3]

The most famous summary of Indian Wisdom is the laconic sentence of the second *Brahmasūtra* of Bādarāyana accepted in one form or another not only by the Vedānta, but also by the great bulk of Indian Philosophy.

It says textually : "*Whence the origin, etc., of this*" and the universally accepted meaning is the following :

Brahman is that from which all things have come forth, in which they are maintained and into which they will return. In one word—also generally accepted—*Brahman is the Cause of the World.*

Now, how is this Cause to function as the real Cause of the World, *i.e.*, as "engaged" in the world and yet be Brahman, *i.e.*, absolute, free, unchangeable, etc. ? The problem thus arises whether Brahman and the Cause are different or identical.

Cause of the world, Demiurge, Prime Mover, Maker, Divine Power, Īśvara or even Creator and the like (to use several names according to different philosophical conceptions), though not equivalent yet they are all expressions for the Principle of the world, but not for the Absolute *as such*. All this is not yet Brahman according to Vedāntism. Our text tells us that Brahman is that *from which* the whole being of the world proceeds, but it has not absolutely identified this cause of the world with Brahman.

We know the main philosophical reason for it. If we indiscriminately link Brahman to the world, it appears rather difficult to maintain its transcendence, and even its Absoluteness. It would seem related to this world and dependent on it. But a dependent Brahman, a relative Absolute, are sheer contradictions.

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[3] *Cf.* My paper *Le concept d'ontonomie*, Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of Philosophy, Vol. III, p. 182 sq. Brussels, 1953.

On the other hand, an absolute unrelatedness would make Brahman superfluous, and would also contradict all what we have been saying so far (and our *Sūtra* in particular) for our First Cause is only First because it is ultimate.

Some theistic schools of Philosophy have tried to avoid this risk by stating that the relation of God as First Cause to the world is not a *real* one, that the reality of the effect and its variations do not affect the simplicity and independence of the Cause, and that divine causality is precisely of this unique type, namely, that the dependence is only one-sided, etc. Actually this theory transcends already dualism and opens a door for an advaitic answer.

The monistic attitudes attempt at solving the problem by denying any kind of dualism that could overshadow the exclusive reality of Brahman.

In fact neither dualism, nor pure monism can solve this problem. Dualism digs a gap that it cannot afterwards overcome. Monism oversimplifies the issue, and does not so much explain the problem as it explains it away. This leads us to the almost unavoidable paradox that nearly all the theologico-philosophical schools have formulated in one way or another: There is identity and diversity, all in one and yet real. The harmonious or rather non-contradictory synthesis of both sides is the touchstone of true metaphysics. But let us first describe the two poles of the problem.

There is *identity*, because if Brahman, or God, or the Absolute is something more than an empty word, it cannot tolerate any ultimate besides Itself, and the First Cause is by definition the Ultimate that our knowledge can—"formally"—conceive. Either there is a First Cause and then this First Cause is Brahman, or there is no First Cause at all. Or, *vice versa*, either Brahman is the First Cause or there is no Brahman at all. If both could stand separately side by side without any kind of relation, Brahman would make no sense for us. It would not be the First Cause and would have nothing to do with the world nor with the First Cause. It could not be even *transcendent*. There would be no room for it, not only gnoseologically but also ontologically. Not gnoseologically, because all that we could know and arrive at is contained in the First Cause, and

if we could go beyond it, it would not be any more the First Cause. Not ontologically, because all being is exhausted by the First Cause and a super-being either is another kind of being and so is included in the First Cause, or else has a relation with "being"—and that is against our premise. In such a case the First Cause would not be any more First Cause and Brahman would not be unrelated to that supposed-to-be First Cause, either.

There is *diversity,* on the other hand, because if the First Cause were only *First* Cause and nothing else—*i.e.,* Brahman—it would have only a kind of ontological priority regarding all other things, but it would not be ontologically different from them. It would be simply *their* Cause. God would be only the lord of the world, but not God in Himself. And if the First Cause were not of different "nature" altogether from the world, it could not have the characters of Immutability, Simplicity, Independence and the like that are required for being First Cause. If the First Cause were only the first link of a chain of causation, why stop there ? That is to say, what makes this particular link the first one ? If the second link has a first link, why does not the first have a previous one ? The only possible answer must deny the value of the metaphor and say that the First Cause—or link—is of a different nature altogether. That means that this First Cause is something other than a mere *First* Cause ; or in other words, its being First is not a numerical quality but a transcendental priority. Its nature is richer and transcends its causality-function. It has a special "nature" of its own, has another side which we do not know and that is not exhausted by being "Cause". The "First Cause" as it *is* in itself, and not merely *quā* "cause", that is Brahman. The Reality that the First Cause is, is not exhausted by its causality-function. This is only its face, its "relation" with us, its "knowable" aspect. The internal being, the transcendent existence, the inner side, that is Brahman. There is diversity between the concepts of Brahman and that of First Cause. They are not the same, and yet they point to the same Supreme Reality. What is the kind of identity and difference of these two "things"? That is the question that we shall try to clarify in the last part of this essay.

We have no wish in what follows to subject Indian philosophy to criticism, nor to say something which it does not say,

nor do we want to do violence to Christian Theology. Neither, however, can we rid ourselves of the quiet and humble conviction that we have to do here not only with one of the deeper intuitions of Indian wisdom, but with the self-same problem that is involved in at least *one aspect* of the Christian Trinity. Further, the dogma of the Trinity would appear as the unsought for—and often indeed inopportune—answer to the inevitable question of an ontic Mediator between the One and the Manifold, the Absolute and the Relative, Brahman and this world. This is, in my opinion, not just a Vedāntic problem. In the final analysis, the logos of Plotinus and the Tathāgata of Buddhism, for example, spring out of a similar view as to the necessity of an ontological link between those two apparently irreconcilable poles: the Absolute and the Relative.

May I venture, first of all, a new reading into the Vedāntic text that will not be fully foreign to the Christian Tradition and yet can claim to be a Commentary? I would request a virgin mind to read what follows.

That from which all things proceed and to which all things return and by which all things are (sustained in their own being), ...that is God, but *primo et per se* not a silent Godhead, not a kind of inaccessible Brahman, not God the Father and source of the whole Divinity, but the *true* Īśvara, God the Son, the Logos, the Christ.

The "*That*" is God, it is identical with the Absolute, it is not a Platonic Demiurge, or a secondary *saguṇa* Brahman for there is only one Source, only one ultimate Reality, but yet it is distinct from it, for it is its "expression", its "image", its "revealer". May we say that this divine "That", this divine Person is begotten by God, equal in nature and yet distinct in its subsistence, in its Personality?

This Principle and End of all things has two natures, though not in the same way, and not on the same level. It has two faces, two aspects as it were. One face regarding the Divinity is the full and equal expression and bearer of it. Another face is turned towards the "outside" world and is its Maker, its Sustainer, the Giver of its being. Yet it *is* not two, but one. One Principle, one Person.

One further commentary while remaining loyal to the text, will extract a new shade of meaning that is not to be found

even in the most famous *bhāṣyakāras*, though one often senses it to be on the tips of their tongues. . Our *bhāṣya* will stress two main points touching on the characteristics of that "*that*" or of that "*whence*".

1. *Yataḥ* "from which", is one of the best names of that Supreme Principle. This holds good in a twofold direction. That "*from which*" the world comes out is a genuine "whence", both in itself and as regards the world. Its proper characteristic is to be a "from which", an "originated" in a certain sense, a "begotten", an "expression", an image. The Logos is in itself, the full Word, the total manifestation, of God, the Father; it is really God from God, Light from Light. That is to say that even its proper "face" imaging the Divinity is distinct from it and yet there is no lack of substantial identity, for the Logos has (as *receiver*) the whole divine nature that the Father, source of the Divinity, has (as *giver*). On the other hand, it is really "that from which" the world comes out, it is the Alpha and the Omega, that from which all things take their being and in which all subsist.

The Vedāntic intuition that Brahman is transcendent, absolute and unrelated to the world and yet sees the world's cause in Īśvara corresponds to something more than to a mere rational working hypothesis, a makeshift to save somehow the two unequal poles of the problem. It comes from an authentic theological instinct handed down from the ṛṣis and conserved in the holy Śrūti. That is why we may be allowed to draw on the Scripture even if we do not fully concur with Tradition.

In fact the Īśvara of Śankara can hardly resist the tremendous tension of being a real mediator and He capitulates as it were, before Brahman, passing to the other side. That Īśvara can still be called God, but He is no more the Absolute, the Ultimate, Brahman, Śankarā's Īśvara is essentially *saguṇa* and yet somehow, pretends also to be *nirguṇa*. The diversity between Brahman and Īśvara is overstressed in order to save the absolute purity of the former.

The Īśvara of our Commentary, quite definitely, does not already belong to the world of māyā only; He is not only and not primarily a "creature", but is equal to Brahman and yet distinct in His form of subsistence. Our *Sūtra* refers us really to Brahman and not to an already māyā-stricken Īśvara, for in such a case the gap would subsist and the problem would

remain. It is not a *saguṇa* Brahman, or a first emanation. It is not either a mere *modality* of the Godhead. Our *Sūtra* points to the God the Father through God the Son.

The Īśvara of Rāmānuja has fallen on the other side, as it were. He is Brahman, and the creation of Īśvara is the Body of the Absolute. In a way there is no break in the continuity between Him and the world. Both together form a whole, the one complete Brahman. The *identity* is here overemphasized in order that Īśvara may somehow save the reality of the world.

The Īśvara of our Commentary points towards what we would like to call the Mystery of Christ, as a being unique in its existence and essence and as such equal to God. He is *really* God, not simply "God" but "equal to God", "Son of God", "God from God". Moreover, He has a double nature. These two natures are "without mixture" and "without change" and yet "inseparable" and "indivisible". He is more than Mediator, He is, in a sense, as the "Whole Christ", the whole reality of the world as far as it is *real, i.e.,* as it *is*—or shall be, if we speak within the frame of time—incorporated in Him, being one with Him, forming one Mystical Body with Him, so that He, one with the *real* world (with the real core of the world) is—shall be if we include time also—one with God the Father, so that God is—shall be—all in all and nothing else beyond, or behind or besides.

We cannot now develop all the functions of our Īśvara. We wanted to say only that He fulfils the requirements of the text and gives an answer to all the antinomies that the History of Indian Philosophy has found in this Mediator between Brahman and the World. Yet our Īśvara is nonetheless mysterious and paradoxical. It requires "Faith", not as blind belief but as a superior form of knowledge, to accept Him, first of all because He is the living Īśvara and not an abstract mental hypothesis.

2. *Janmādi* "the origin, etc." The thirst for eternity of the Indian mind has sometimes been the cause of overlooking the double sense of the "production, etc.", of Īśvara. There is a production, sustentation, etc., of being as such, in an intemporal if not eternal way. And there is also the continuation of all such actions running through the temporal development of things.

The Īśvara of our *bhāṣya* fulfils both rôles. He is that from which being *is*, in an intemporal way, and that towards which being *becomes*, within the temporal process.

The first way for us to *imagine* the intemporal origin, production, sustentation, etc., is to consider it as already fulfilled at the end of the time of each being, and suppress then the temporal helping-factor. This is only in image, because we have to transcend imagination and even thinking if we have to glimpse into the eternal—which is not simply mere intemporality. In such a perspective there is nothing but God, a God nevertheless that as absolute I has an eternal *Thou*, equal to Him and yet not a second I but a Thou. In this Thou, which is the Son, the whole Christ, the new heavens and new earth are included, all human beings participate in it, find their place in it and are fully what they are, through being one with the Son. All that *is*, the whole of Reality is nothing but God—Father, Christ and Holy Spirit.

In time, that is in the temporal development of all beings, that here on earth are only pilgrim beings, things in the making, itinerant creatures ; within time, our Īśvara is also that from which they come forth and towards which they return and by which they are sustained. The ontological growth of all things in time is nothing but a fuller and fuller realisation of their being in Christ. Whatever kind of reality this temporary world might have, it is also sustained, conditioned, produced, and attracted by this divine Mediator discretely indicated in this *Brahmasūtra*.

"*Trinitas reducit dualitatem ad unitatem*", "the Trinity reduces dualism to unity", says Hans Andre, following if not actually quoting St. Augustine, who describes the final state of the world in the words, *et erit unus Christus amans seipsum*, there will be only one Christ loving Himself. Not through selfishness, but because the fullness of the Godhead will dwell even bodily in Him. In Him all is recapitulated and the Spirit will quicken it with that life which overflows out of the Father alone.

But to develop those ideas further giving them an exhaustive treatment which would bring them out of this overcompressed state, would lead us outside the humble rôle of a Commentator, a *bhāṣyakāra*. Ultimately we had only one single Commentary to make : *That from which this world comes forth and to which it returns and by which it is sustained, that .... that is Christ.*

It is quite obvious that neither the author of the *Brahmasutras*, nor their Commentators thought for a moment of Christ

explicitly. It is also an incontrovertible fact that the living Christ in whom Christians believe cannot be equated with the Īśvara of the Vedānta.

But the burden of our tale is this—that many of mankind's philosophical and theological texts contain a *"sensus plenior"*, a fuller sense. We must refrain from rejecting a text or a tradition—the contrary attitude has often proved fatal—simply because it does not accord with our already crystallised ideas or formulations. Only when we have arrived at the "res significata", the intended thing, have we the right to exercise a pure critique. Only then too can we reach a higher synthesis. This synthesis would utilise new and old elements—*nova et vetera*—letting what is superfluous fall by the wayside.

ŚAIVISM IN SOUTH INDIA

By Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi

"South India needed a Personal God, an assurance of immortality and a call to prayer. These it found in Māṇikkavācagar's compositions" says Dr. G. U. Pope in the Preface to his translation of the *Tiruvācagam*. Scholars are not agreed about the date of Māṇikkavācagar, some favouring the fourth century A.D. and others favouring the ninth century A.D. Even if the earlier date is accepted, it is possible to give references to still earlier literature in Tamil where we find a lofty theism. In the *Paripāḍal*, a Sangam work, we have the following prayer :

> "We pray
> Not for wealth and gold and enjoyment
> But for grace, love and righteousness."

In the same work we find the sentiment that the fruit of contemplative worship must be the deepening and increase of such worship.

In fact, in seeking to understand Southern Śaivism or Śaiva Siddhānta, we have to take into account Sangam literature of the early centuries of the Christian era in Tamil also in addition to the later Tamil works and the Vedas and Śaivāgamas. It is usual to classify the later Tamil works on Śaiva Siddhānta into two broad groups, devotional and doctrinal. The songs of the Śaivite saints portraying their religious experiences have been collected and classified into twelve books called the *Panniru Tirumurai*. Special mention must be made of at least some of these. The first seven are called *Tevāram*. They contain the songs of the three saints—Sambandhar, Appar and Śundaramūrti. The eighth work is called *Tiruvācagam* which is a composition by Māṇikkavācagar. The tenth work is called the *Tirumandiram*. Though this is included in the group of devotional works, it can very well belong to the group of doctrinal works. The twelfth work popularly known as the *Periya-Purāṇam* is a biography of Śaivite saints. Among the doctrinal works known under their collective name of *Meykaṇḍa Śāstras* or the *Fourteen Siddhānta Śāstras*, those best known are Meykandar's *Śivajnāna Bodham*, Arulnandi's *Śivajnāna Siddhiyar*, and Umāpati Śivam's *Śivaprakāśam* and *Tiruarulpayan*. Though the first systematic formulation of the Siddhanta is contained in the *Sivajnāna Bodham* which is a work of the thirteenth

century A.D., two other works in this group, the *Tiruvundiyār* and the *Tirukkalirruppadiyār* belong to an earlier period. Śaivism is a very ancient religion antedating its systematic formulation by several centuries. Southern Śaivism bears the distinctive stamp of Tamil culture.

Śaiva Siddhānta speaks of three verities, Pati (God), Pasu (the soul) and Pāśa (bonds). The doctrinal works seek to establish the existence of these by arguments and by critical consideration of the views of other systems. Though the Siddhāntin has faith in logic, the truths he seeks to establish arise in and are confirmed by religious experience. Śaivite religious experience is a Saga of God's grace. God is beyond the scriptures, and the ken of the human mind; beyond the reach of speech and reason. Is He unknown and unknowable then? The Siddhāntin replies that with His Grace, all these, scriptures, etc., can help us to know Him. The existence of God, of souls and of the bonds which cloud the intelligence and cripple the activities of the souls—the existence of these is proved on the pulse of religious experience which arises by God's grace. Arguments only seek to clarify and confirm such experience for oneself and for others. The story of Kannappar, an illiterate Śaivite Saint, is deservedly popular and it has evoked the admiration and respect of a number of saints and seers down the centuries.

How does the Siddhāntin argue for the existence of God? He proceeds thus: The world in which we live consists of the three parts classifiable as he, she and it (masculine, feminine and neuter). It is subject to the three states of creation, maintenance and destruction. Hence its emergence after its destruction, must be from the Destroyer into Whom it was taken up. It is from Śiva the Supreme, therefore, that the world can emerge. To the question why should the world be periodically destroyed, the Siddhāntin replies that it is to give rest to the Souls who have to go through repeated births and deaths in order to get rid of the connate impurity (āṇava) which is beginninglessly associated with them, like verdigris in copper. The existence of such an impurity (āṇava) is inferred from the fact that the intelligence of souls is clouded by something which is a positive factor.

Another argument for the existence of God is based on the requirements of morality. The souls engage in activity and therefore have to experience the consequences thereof.

These consequences cannot, being inert, attach themselves to the respective agents. The agents (souls), though intelligent, are not unclouded intelligences and would, in all probability, try to enjoy those consequences which are good but which they have not earned, and escape those which are bad which they have earned. Hence there must be a supreme benevolent Intelligence which apportions consequences in accordance with the original deeds. Such an Intelligence is God. He gives the souls bodies and worlds in which they can live and experience the fruits of their deeds. Karma (deeds) and māyā (the primal stuff out of which bodies and worlds are fashioned) as limiting the freedom and intelligence of souls are considered to be bonds along with āṇava. These three constitute pāśa. But while āṇava is the root evil and is wholly an obscuring principle, karma and māyā used aright may help the soul to break the bonds. Using these to remove the root evil is like using fuller's earth to remove dirt.

The Siddhāntin argues that the soul is not a void, since there is something which exists even in the very act of denial. It is not the sense organs or the internal organs or the vital air. It is not God. Even in the state of release it continues to exist and does not get merged in God. When the scriptures declare that the soul is one, they mean that the Supreme Soul is one. Meykaṇḍār makes it very clear that it would be a fault which cannot be forgiven were the soul to forget God Who has revealed Himself to it and made it like unto Himself. If the soul had forgotten Him earlier it was through ignorance and so could be forgiven. But there can be no excuse once that ignorance is removed through grace. Therefore even in the state of release the worship of that Great One Who has made the soul like unto Himself is a source of strength to the soul.

The souls are essentially pure but are beginninglessly obscured by āṇava (literally āṇava is that which makes the pervasive soul atomic). How the souls came to lose their purity is not known. All that the Siddhāntin says is that no beginning can be traced for this obscuration. Hence it is said to be beginningless (anādhi). Though the Siddhāntin does not know how it began, he is confident that the obscuration will come to an end. He is confident that all souls, without exception, will be saved. In fact, one of the verses in the *Tiruarulpayan* says that the released souls are full of compassion to rescue

the souls still in bondage. The saints invite those in bondage who hanker after fleeting worldly pleasures to taste the eternal joys of union with God. They record their religious experiences in songs, to proclaim God's grace for the benefit of others.

The strength of a chain depends on its weakest link; so also the strength of the bonds which bind the souls. The strength of this threefold cord (āṇava, māyā and karma) will depend on its weak cords. We can weaken the hold of māyā and karma and thus weaken the hold of āṇava. In fact God has given māyā to serve as a lamp when we are enveloped in the darkness of āṇava. In other words, through the products of māyā, *viz.*, the world and the physical body, the soul can endeavour to work out its salvation. But souls usually forget that body and wordly objects are given to work out the consequences of karma and acquire eligibility for the removal of āṇava—and they forge fresh bonds of karma. The Siddhāntin says that only through human birth salvation can be attained. Even the celestials have to be reborn as humans, to worship God and attain release. If human birth is occasionally spoken of in disparagement, it is because its excellence in terms of the possibility of salvation is forgotten and it is misused to increase the bondage.

As for karma, we find a similar possibility. So long as a soul acts with a sense of agency, it is bound by the consequences of its deeds. When it surrenders its will to God and acts as His instrument, karma ceases to bind it. When with this attitude, the soul cultivates indifference, not to deeds but to their consequences, it becomes eligible for God's grace. God himself appears as Guru, performs a purificatory ceremony (dīkṣā), weans the soul from the influence of pāśa, and reveals the soul's kinship with Himself.

To understand Śaivism, we have to read the devotional works and the biographies of saints. In giving a general description of the saints, the *Periya Purāṇam* says:

> Theirs was a (spiritual) wealth which was above the vicissitudes of fortune.
> They looked upon a piece of gold and potsherd as alike (matter).
> Worshipping on account of the love that welled forth in them.
> They were of a resoluteness which did not desire even release.

They worshipped God because they could not help loving and worshipping Him. Hence the question of the motive for worship, whether it is the selfish one of desiring one's own salvation does not arise. Here is what Maṇikkavācagar says :

I ask not bliss of Indra, Māl or Ayan ; though my house and home
Be ruin'd, friendship form I none save with Thine own ; though hell's abyss
I enter, I unmurmuring go, if grace divine appoint my lot ;
O King ! no other God save thee I ponder, our Transcendent Good !
(G. U. Pope's Translation of the Tiruvācagam Hymn V. The Sacred Canto verse 21.)

We find saint Sambandhar singing :

Even if I falter or fainting sink
Even if disease continues to afflict me
I shall worship Thy Feet.

Here is what a gentle, woman saint says :

Even if He does not remove my troubles, even if He does not take pity on me
Even if He does not indicate the path I am to follow
My love for Him will not cease
(For) I have given my heart to Him.

The God Whom these saints worship is no philosophical abstraction or conclusion of a syllogism. Saint Sundarar says that he seeks to draw near Him because he has heard of His grace granted to saints of old—Sambandhar, Appar and others. In Śaivite religious literature we come across references to Śiva's grace, granted to members of the sub-human species also. Far from being indifferent to suffering, Śiva is concerned to relieve suffering even more than a mother could be in the case of her young one. He is the mother of everything that lives. How can He be indifferent ? Śiva's drinking poison to prevent destruction of the Universe is a classical instance of His love for all beings. The blue throat of Śiva is a perpetual reminder of His love.

Śiva's activities—creation, maintenance of the world, etc., are all actuated by His grace. He wants to save all the souls. The time span may be prodigiously long—apparently unending cycles of creation, etc. But through it all runs one purpose :

His purpose—to save the souls and restore them to their divine heritage.

How is this grace obtained ? Is it by the soul's effort ? No doubt the soul has to engage in moral and religious activity. But the Siddhāntin says that the very impulse for these arises from God's grace. Yes, even to worship God, His Grace is necessary. Two ways of the operation of Grace are spoken of. They are compared to the way of the monkey and the way of the cat. The young one of the monkey has to cling to its mother for safety. It has thus to co-operate with its mother. But the kitten depends entirely on its mother for its safety and is therefore carried about by its mother. Saint Paṭṭinattār plaintively sings that he is not like the young monkey and that therefore God should treat him as the cat does its kitten.

The saints make it very clear that they do not deserve God's Grace and yet, out of His boundless compassion, He grants them Grace. Māṇikkavācagar compares himself to a dog ; sometimes he says he is more despicable than a dog. In returning time and again to the enjoyment of worldly objects in preference to spiritual joys, the comparison with the dog is meaningful. (The dog returns to the vomit.) But the dog has one virtue—unswerving loyalty to its master. Those who forget their loyalty to their master are more despicable than the dog. Māṇikkavācagar is frequently surprised by the miracle of his own salvation. Others, who pine for it and do continuous penance for it are still waiting, while he, all unworthy, is saved ! It appears almost comical to him, as would the appearance of a dog in a palanquin. 'Even me He took as something worth,—like dog in sumptuous litter borne.'

There is one point to which some attention must be given. When the Saints, no matter to which religion they belong, talk of their sinful ways, and their unworthiness, should we take such references as autobiographical ? It may be that even the Saints had their unregenerate days in the past and so might have been guilty of lapses. But when alternating with statements of their spiritual happiness we find self-deprecatory remarks, would this explanation hold good ? If not, how are such remarks to be understood ? Two considerations merit attention. One is, when, for some reason, there is a temporary break in the religious experience, the Saint feels it so much that he starts a critical and self-examination and attributes the

break not to the withdrawal of God's Grace but to the possibility of some great lapse of his own. The other consideration relates to the sense of utter unworthiness the Saint feels in the presence of God. In the presence of the Holy, it would be presumptuous to think that human righteousness could be of any avail. We may, perhaps, add a third consideration also. The Saint, in his compassion for the unregenerate masses, identifies himself with them and feels their lapses as his own.

Śaivism speaks of God as Love. If this love encompasses all beings, then it is the obvious duty of Śaivites, following their Lord and Master, to treat all lives with reverence and love. Vegetarianism is only an external sign of an inner grace, not to hurt any life but to love it. The important thing, of course, is the inner grace. Vegetarianism, without real love, will be of no avail at all.

Śaivism, in calling for the worship of the blue-throated Śiva, demands a readiness on the part of its adherents, to take the sufferings of others on themselves and enable the erstwhile sufferers to enjoy good things. A popular song puts the matter thus :

> If one does not share other people's sufferings,
> If one does not overcome narrow attachments to oneself
> What is the use of chanting the Tevāram ?

Śaivism in the South has had a long history. If the past is any indication of its inherent worth, its future is assured.

THE MODERN HINDU VIEW OF HISTORY

By The Rev. S. J. Samartha

A shift of emphasis from contemplation to action, from ideas to events is a significant feature of modern thought. India asserting herself increasingly in the affairs of the world can no longer be considered a silent spectator of history, but should be regarded as an active participant in history today. Such an attitude involves a reinterpretation of some of the fundamentals of the Hindu faith, a task to which increasing attention is being paid in modern India.

The modern period in India's cultural history extends roughly from Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) to Radhakrishnan (1888-). It must be said at the outset that what may be described as 'modern' on a particular occasion ceases to be modern very soon because of the speed and tempo of life. "Any study of Indian affairs at this point of time", remarks Griffiths, "resembles an attempt to take a still picture of a fast moving scene".[1] By the time the picture is processed and is ready for viewing, the details are, more often than not, overtaken by fast moving events. Therefore all that can be done here is to indicate general trends, limiting one's range of interest to certain religio-philosophic thinkers of modern Hinduism like Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and some others who are not merely the products of modern Hindu renaissance but who have also, in some measure, made a lasting contribution to its character and movement. One can find a full-fledged philosophy of history here, but there are indications that a more positive view of history is emerging in modern India. To substantiate this observation attention will be drawn to three major trends in modern Hindu thought. These are first, responsible historic activity in the sense of writing books on Indian history; second, the working out of what may be described as a 'philosophy of action'; and third, the reinterpretation of certain fundamentals of the Hindu faith. All these, in their cumulative effect, contribute in considerable measure to the emergence of a modern Hindu view of history.

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[1] Percival Griffiths, *Modern India*, New York, 1957, p. 17.

Historical Activity in Modern India

After a consideration of the classical Hindu attitude of indifference towards historical facts the change of attitude in the modern period is striking. The charge of indifference to facts no longer applies to modern Indian historians. Today there is a great deal of work being done on the different periods of Indian history and the various aspects of Indian life. One needs only to refer to the *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Congress* or to the numerous 'surveys' of Indian history or to the more ambitious projects which deal at length with the history and culture of the people. What is of interest here is not just the fact that history is being written in India today, but also the change of attitude towards facts and the interpretation of those facts in the life of the nation. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point.

Sardar K. M. Panikkar's book, *A Survey of Indian History*, was published on August 15, 1947 to coincide with the date of India's independence. Within the next seven years it was reprinted nine times, a distinction rarely achieved by books on history. Panikkar's is an attempt to meet a growing demand for a history written from the Indian point of view, particularly because, as he observes, generations of students were brought up on Indian histories written entirely from the British point of view. One of the points which he constantly emphasises is that the history of a people should be written not just from the political point of view but from that of culture and civilisation. "The history of India has therefore to be a history of social growth and development and not primarily a political history".[2] According to him the history of a country must deal with :

> the conscious effort of a people to achieve a civilisation ..... what counts in the end is the achievement of the people, the faith that moves them to great deeds, the endeavours that preserve society as a living organism fit for the common man to live in.[3]

In his book he tries to give a careful and balanced consideration to the facts of Indian history in a larger setting. This

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[2] In his presidential address to the Indian Historical Congress, 1955 ; see his book *The State and the Citizen*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1955. pp. 92-93.

[3] *A Survey of Indian History*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1954, pp. 231-32.

is a fresh approach to Indian history. It insists on interpreting facts in the broader context of the life of the people. It emphasises 'the faith that moves them to great deeds'. It also implies the need for a principle of continuity and a structure of meaning based on the cultural heritage of the people without which there will be no standard of reference.

Another historian of note in modern India is Sir Jadunath Sircar. He was once invited by the Corporation of Calcutta to serve on a Committee to remove old statues, presumably British, from the city. But he declined the job saying that "they should not be removed as they furnished historical records of permanent value".[4] As early as 1908 he worked out a scheme for *A New History of the Indian People* extending to twenty volumes. However, very little could be done till Rajendra Prasad came to his help in 1937 to push forward the scheme, but by the time the whole series could be completed World War II intervened and interrupted the work. In connection with his projected history Sir Jadunath wrote :

> National history, like every other history worthy of its name and deserving to endure, must be true as regards the facts and reasonable in the interpretation of them.... In addition we shall have to explain, with that sympathetic insight which only a native can possess .... why things happened with our ancestors as they did actually happen. In this task ..... the Historian must be the judge.[5]

It must be pointed out here that in clarifying his objectives Sir Jadunath is not just a professional historian, but also in some measure a 'philosopher of history', for he points out the need not only for 'a reasonable interpretation of facts' but also for explaining 'why things happened the way they did actually happen'. Thus the historian's function is understood to be not only to select and record facts, but also to judge and interpret them. But this latter function cannot be done except within a larger framework of meaning and one might observe that in modern India people are searching for this structure of reference with reference to which facts may be interpreted and if possible understood.

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[4] *Madras Mail*, August 17, 1952.

[5] *A New History of the Indian People*, Gen. Editor Jadunath Sircar, Bharatiya Itihasa Parishad, Lahore, 1946, Vol. VI (n.d.), p. vi.

A similar but more articulate and deeper emphasis on history is seen in the motivations and objectives of the volumes on the *History and Culture of the Indian People* published by the *Bharatiya Itihasa Samiti* under the chairmanship of Sri. K. M. Munshi.[6] In Munshi one can see a deeper awareness of the sense of history, of the meaning of national memory and historical tradition and the necessity to interpret the values of the past in the context of the present. Munshi observes that today history "is being consciously lived by the Indians" and what has happened in the past is part of India's modern struggle. Similarly what is happening now will be of importance for the future. Therefore it is not enough just to conserve and record what has happened, but it is also necessary to assess the meaning of those facts in the life of the nation. He remarks,

> The central purpose of a history must therefore be to investigate and unfold the values which age after age have inspired the inhabitants of a country to develop their collective will and to express it through the manifold activities of their life.[7]

To write such a history one must consider India to be "a living entity with a central continuous urge" for without such an outlook it is impossible to understand modern India which, in the words of Munshi, has determined "not to be untrue to its ancient self, and yet to be equal to the highest demands of modern life".[8] In all this modern Indian historians are making their own contribution to the shaping of a view of history. Panikkar emphasises 'the faith that moves them to great deeds'. Sir Jadunath looks for the reason 'why things happened .... as they did actually happen.' Munshi wants history 'to investigate and unfold values'. Thus, in this description of the role of the modern Indian historian, these thinkers in some measure pass into the realm of philosophy of history.

A Philosophy of Action

The second important factor which contributes to the shaping of a view of history is the growth of what may be described as a 'philosophy of action'. While contemplation is always held in high regard, it is now recognised that action too is important.

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[6] General Ed. R. C. Majumdar, Allen and Unwin, London, 1951.
[7] *A New History of the Indian People*, Vol. I, p. 8.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Even men like Tagore, Aurobindo and in recent days Jai Prakash Narain, who were once active in the political life of the country but who, for reasons of their own withdrew from it, do not minimise the importance of deeds in the life of the nation. Quite a few of them are trying to work out a spiritual basis for responsible participation in history. To support this observation one might take into account the number of commentaries written in recent years on the *Bhagavadgita* described by Gandhi as advocating the gospel of selfless *action*. A number of these commentaries are written by men who are not academic thinkers living in the seclusion of sheltered life away from the dust and heat of politics, but who have been at one time or other actively connected with the public life of the country. Tilak, Aurobindo, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, and many others have written commentaries or books on the *Gita* and along with these English works the influence of their translation into the vernaculars of the country in shaping the outlook of the people cannot be ignored in this connection.[9]

Moreover, it is pointed out that deeds are an important part of one's religious life. Lala Lajpat Rai one of India's leading nationalists wrote,

> Our souls we can find only by looking inward and adjusting our outward circumstances to them. No one can lead a life of *dharma* unless his outward and inward beings are in harmony ..... Religion does not consist of contemplation only, but contemplation and action.[10]

There are others who emphasise that responsible participation in history is necessary for India's greatness. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of *Arya Samaj*, calling upon the people to give up the negative attitude of pessimistic resignation to the decrees of fate declared,

> An energetic and active life is preferable to the acceptance of the decrees of destiny. Destiny is the outcome of deeds.

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[9] To give one example Mahatma Gandhi's commentary on the *Gita* entitled in the original Gujarati *Anasakti-yoga*, has sold more than 53,000 copies. Mahadeva Desai prepared an English translation of this entitled: *The Gospel of Selfless Action* or *Gita according to Gandhi*. Navajiva Publication House, Ahmedabad, 1946. 10,000 copies of this were printed in five years.

[10] Lala Lajpat Rai, *India's Will to Freedom*, p. 77.

> Deeds are the creation of destiny. Virtuous activity is superior to passive resignation.[11]

Along with this stress on deeds, there has also been an attempt on the religious and philosophic levels to discover the significance of deeds and to work out a possible basis for action by going back to the resources of India's national heritage. When Aurobindo suddenly decided to withdraw from politics, his action was strongly criticised as one of renunciation. But Aurobindo answered by pointing out that he only wished to seek the deeper roots of action and existence through *tapasya* because that was the only means by which a person can become "an efficient worker in the great hours of the world".[12] In a letter to a disciple in 1932 after years of reflection he wrote,

> I may also say that I did not leave politics because I felt I could do nothing more there ; such an idea was very far from me .... There was not the least motive of despair or sense of futility behind my withdrawal.[13]

Aurobindo's motive was to discover a spiritual basis for 'efficient action' in the world and for over forty years he pursued his object in his *ashram*. An equally philosophic attempt to bring together the eternal and the momentary is made by Radhakrishnan who almost from the beginning of his career defended Hindu thought from the criticism of people who claimed that it was life-negating. While he admits that there is a causal connection between 'the anæmic Hindu religion' and India's 'political failure' during certain periods in her history, he argues that on that ground the whole outlook on life engendered by Hindu thought cannot be characterised as life-negating. Emphasising the importance of action he wrote,

> Eternal life is not an escape from time. It is life that we can enter now. It carries with it redemption from this world, but not flight from it. Its reality overflows into the deeds of life.[14]

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[11] Quoted by O'Malley, *Modern India and the West*, Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 347.

[12] In a letter to Romain Rolland, quoted by D. S. Sarma, *The Renaissance of Hinduism*, Banaras Hindu University, 1944, p. 340.

[13] Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Liberator*, Jaico, Bombay. 1954. p. 148.

[14] Quoted by O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

All this is particularly significant in the present national context of India where democracy has been chosen as the way of political life. Democracy requires a doctrine of man and his destiny both for its stability and lasting usefulness. Whether the most effective and lasting contribution towards the shaping of that basis comes from secular humanism or the religio-philosophic heritage of India remains to be seen. Along with the need for working out a philosophy of action, there is also the necessity for an ultimate horizon of meaning, for an understanding of man and community, of the conflicts and tensions in history and of the frustrations and possibilities of man in the realm of history. It is in this search for a basis for action and in the testing of resources that one looks for evidences of a possible view of history. Some of the major strands of interpretation which contribute to the emergence of a view of history during the modern period have to be considered in this connection.

Nature, History and the Cosmic Process

While the representative modern Hindu thinkers recognise the importance of history it is understood to be within the context of the cosmic process. Thus, to Tagore, between nature, man and God there is an inseparable evolutionary continuity which is based on the doctrine of the unity of all life.[15] His is an essentially æsthetic view of life in which the stress on beauty and truth, joy and love, balance and harmony almost submerge the conflicts and tragedies of history. Rhythm is the all important category, whether to explain the difference between beauty and ugliness, rich and the poor or good and evil.[16] Gandhi made no distinction between this world and another. To him "there is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there' "[17] Aurobindo in his great work *Life Divine* argues that history is part of the evolutionary cosmic process in which the moving force is *Sakti* which appropriates and transforms all the elements in the cosmos.[18] To Radhakrishnan also history is part of the cosmic process in which the 'world's unborn soul' is struggling

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[15] *Creative Unity*, Macmillan, New York, 1922, p. 45.

[16] *The Religion of an Artist*, Vishva-Bharati Book Shop, Calcutta, 1953, (reprint), p. 13.

[17] *Harijan*, July 26, 1942, p. 248.

[18] *Life Divine*, The Grey Stone Press, New York, 1949, p. 734.

to be born.[19] This way of looking at history is mainly the result of an absence of a doctrine of purposive creation and this factor influences the modern Hindu understanding of history to a large extent.

However, although history is not *separate* from the cosmic process it is *distinct* from nature. In this emphasis the modern thinkers differ from classical Hindu thought. To Tagore the distinctiveness of history is to be found in a change of rhythm. To Aurobindo history is marked by the dominance of reason in man. Radhakrishnan remarks, "History is not a branch of biology. The drama of human personalities is distinct from life in the animal kingdom".[20] Thus these men, while accepting that history is part of the cosmic process and that human destiny should therefore be viewed in a larger context and long-range scheme of things, nevertheless recognise that the movement of history cannot be bound by natural sequence or by mere biological laws. Radhakrishnan goes further when he says, that "history is neither a chapter of accidents, nor a determined drift. It is a pattern of absolute significance".[21] While his exact meaning in such statements is not always clear and while one should be careful not to discover unwarranted implications in his words, it is obvious that the motive of these thinkers is somehow to remove the futility of cyclical movement and to make room for the emergence of the new in history.

The Doctrine of *Maya* and the Status of History

If some of the modern Hindu thinkers thus give sufficient importance to history so as to make it significant, then the question arises to what extent is the realm of history 'real' to these thinkers. This question cannot be discussed without referring to the interpretation of the doctrine of *maya*. The implications of the doctrine of *maya* to a view of history have already been indicated in the previous lecture. The tendency of modern thinkers is to interpret *maya* in such a way as to preserve the

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[19] See his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. Humphrey Milford, London, 1939, Chapter I.

[20] *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, Tudor Publishing House, 1952, contains articles by different writers on his thought. The first chapter is Radhakrishnan's own intellectual biography (hereafter referred to in this essay as '*Fragments*') and the last chapter is his reply to critics (hereafter referred to as '*Reply*'). *Fragments*, p. 29.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

reality of the world. This point may well be illustrated by drawing attention to the thought of two major thinkers of modern Hinduism, *viz.*, Sri Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan.

Aurobindo strongly criticises Sankara's doctrine of *maya* stating that it leads to illusionism. In this interpretation of Sankara's *mayavada,* while Dasgupta agrees with Aurobindo, both Radhakrishnan and Sarma do not agree with him. What is of particular interest in this controversy is the recognition of these men that any theory of the world which does not recognise the reality of history is of little use because, in the words of Aurobindo, it leaves part of our being "out in the cold to perish in the twilight of the unreal reality of *maya*".[23] Furthermore, Aurobindo points out that such a view does not lead to a responsible attitude towards history. He writes :

> Any uncompromising theory of Illusion solves no problem of our existence ; it only cuts the problem out for the individual by showing him a way of exit .... The theory of Illusion cuts the knot of the world problem ; it does not disentangle it ; it is an escape, not a solution ....[24]

According to Aurobindo the Buddha and Sankara gave great power and expression to the doctrine of *mayavada* influencing the outlook of the people very much and making them live "In the shadow of the great refusal".[25] He remarks that Sankara's negation of the world leads to "an unreal or real unreal universe reposing on a transcendent Reality", whereas his own system of thought, in contrast, leads to a "real universe reposing on a Reality at once universal and transcendent or absolute".[26] Thus not only in bringing out the implications of the *mayavada* but also in working out his own world-view in which the reality of history is accepted, Aurobindo has contributed considerably towards a more affirmative attitude towards history.

Radhakrishnan while differing from Aurobindo in his interpretation of Sankara nevertheless agrees with him that the reality of the world has to be preserved. In one of his latest works he frankly states that he has interpreted the doctrine of

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[23] *Life Divine,* p. 419.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 419.

[25] Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Liberator,* p. 148.

[26] *Life Divine* p. 374.

maya "so as to save the world and give it real meaning".[27] He recognises that if *maya* is interpreted so as to mean illusion it would make ethical action in history relatively unimportant and possibly completely insignificant. Radhakrishnan defends Sankara on the ground that his interpretation of *maya* does not lead to a theory of illusion. He writes,

> Sankara, who is rightly credited with the systematic formulation of the doctrine of *maya*, tells us that the highest reality is unchangeable, and therefore that changing existence such as human history has not ultimate reality (*paramarthika satta*). He warns us, however, against the temptation to regard what is not completely real as utterly illusory. The world has empirical being (*vyavaharika satta*) which is quite different from illusory existence (*pratibhasika satta*). Human experience is neither ultimately real nor completely illusory ..... The world is not a phantom, though it is not (ultimately) real.[28]

Radhakrishnan's answer to this problem is thus of half-way house recognising what he describes as 'the relative reality' of the world, trying to provide a basis for man's responsible participation in history. He observes,

> When the Hindu thinkers ask us to free ourselves from *maya* they are asking us to shake off our bondage to the unreal values which are dominating us. They do not ask us to treat life as an illusion or to be indifferent to the world's welfare.[29]

He also states that the view that the spiritual world is more real than the material world,

> does not destroy the sense of reality of the historical process. History is not a meaningless repetition but a creative process determined by the free act of individuals.[30]

A few observations can be made on this question. It may be said that the very vehemence with which Radhakrishnan argues that Sankara's *mayavada* need not lead to a theory of illusion

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[27] *Reply*, p. 800.
[28] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 86.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 123-29.

is sufficient indication that it has been so understood by many in the course of the history of Hinduism and still casts its shadow on the outlook of people. But the present recognition that it need not be so is also an indication that the realm of history is becoming significant in modern Hindu thought. Further, Radhakrishnan's description of the world being 'relatively real' seems to be a middle ground which is logically untenable. The significance given to history on the *vyavaharika* level is nullified when it is said that on the *paramarthika* level, that is ultimately, it is to be transcended. It must also be said that the attempt to hold on both to the significance of history on the one hand and the reality of God on the other cannot have a sure ground except with reference to a doctrine of creation.

Man in History

Another feature of modern Hindu thought which helps to shape a view of history is the understanding of man, his possibilities, limitations and destiny. What is being considered here is not a full-fledged doctrine of man. A brief attempt is made to refer to only certain of those factors which help one's understanding of man as a historical being rather than as a being in history. In modern Hindu thought there is, on the one hand, a stress on the *personality* of man rather than his self or spirit. The doctrine of *karma* is being so interpreted as to remove the sense of fatalism which limits man's possibilities in history. On the other hand, caste as a social structure is being understood more in the sense of the community in which the person can maintain his individuality, even when he has to accept his interdependence with others.

The stress on personality is found in varying degrees in many important modern Hindu thinkers. Tagore said that man's distinctiveness lies in his personality, his freedom, love and creative power. To Aurobindo and to Radhakrishnan man is not just spirit, but a unity of many elements. Man is a "complex multi-dimensional being".[31] There need be no conflict between body and spirit. "The realm of the spirit is not cut off from the realm of life."[32] There is an awareness that an overemphasis on the spiritual freedom of man to rise above the flux of history will result in man's looking for a way of

[31] *The Bhagavadgita*, Allen and Unwin, 1948, p. 46.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

escape from history. In interpreting the doctrine of *karma* the object seems to be to remove the sense of fatalism implied in it. Both Tagore and Aurobindo reject the classical doctrine of *karma* and point out that it leads to fatalism and resignation in history. Gandhi, while accepting *karma* as an inexorable moral principle in life,[33] still refuses to accept it as a deterministic principle when he says, "We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future".[34] Radhakrishnan tries to maintain a delicate balance between *karma* and freedom. To him "*karma* is not a mechanical principle, but a spiritual necessity".[35] While it certainly influences man, it does not determine man's actions because according to him "*karma* is a condition, not a necessity".[36]

The rejection of the caste system or its reinterpretation is also a factor affecting man's freedom and responsibility. The rigidity of the hierarchical caste system by fitting each individual in a fixed position in society determined by birth not only destroys individual freedom, but also the sense of community which is of importance as a structure in history. It is recognised in modern Hindu thought that the caste system had "degenerated into a system of oppression and intolerance".[37] However, both Gandhi and Radhakrishnan accept what is described as the original principle of the caste system.[38] Radhakrishnan in his commentary on the *Gita* points out that one's place in society depends not on *jati* (birth) but on *guna* (quality) and *karma* (action).[39] In spite of the fact that these thinkers recognize the importance of the 'solitary individual' in history, they also point out the need for a sense of community. Community is the structure of social progress in history, which links the past with the future and provides the continuity of influence and consequences. Individuals even in moments of decisions are not solitary because the factors determining one's choice are influenced by one's heritage in the community and will also affect the future of the community. The emphasis on community

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[33] *Autobiography* I, p. 563.
[34] *Harijan*, January 8, 1947, p. 176.
[35] *Hindu View of Life*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1926, p. 72.
[36] *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 48.
[37] *Hindu View of Life*, p. 93.
[38] See *Young India*, April 23, 1925, p. 145.
[39] *The Bhagavadgita*, pp. 160-61.

as an important category not against the individual personality, but as providing him with opportunities for the fulfilment of his destiny, thus becomes an important factor in the modern Hindu understanding of history.

Evil in History

Any view of history which takes the world seriously and recognises man's freedom and possibilities confronts the fact of evil in all structures of history. Evil is a threat not only to the possible fulfilment of man's destiny but also to any disclosures of meaning in history. It also is a hindrance to the possibility of values being realised in history. There is a tendency among the modern Hindu thinkers to consider evil more in metaphysical than moral terms and to relegate the struggle between good and evil in history to the secondary plane of reality. However, all regard evil as a serious threat and emphasise the need to struggle against it.

Gandhi recognised evil both in man and in all social structures as a fact rather than as a problem. He admits that there is a certain mystery about it.[40] But he also states that to argue about the relativity of good and evil in history is to lead man astray from moral responsibility.[41] So he evolved a strategy to fight against it in all forms believing that it could be overcome within history. Tagore's is essentially a poet's understanding of evil. It is like accidents in a child's attempt to walk. Evil, pain and suffering will "grow into good" because "the potentialities of perfection outweigh actual contradictions".[42] Evil factors need "only the control and cadence of spiritual laws to change them into good".[43] "Goodness is the miracle which turns the tumult of chaos into a dance of beauty".[44] But this kind of interpretation of evil in history has more charm than depth. To Aurobindo evil is *avidya*—ignorance—, 'contrary phenomenon',[45] simply a bye-product of the evolutionary process, "a phenomenon thrown up by the cosmic Force in its drive towards evolutionary self-expression".[46] Radhakrishnan recog-

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[40] *Young India*, October 11, 1928.
[41] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 680.
[42] *Sadhana*, p. 52.
[43] *Creative Unity*, p. 118.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[45] *Life Divine*, p. 555.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 555.

nises the distinction between good and evil only in the *vyavaharika* world. The guided soul leaves behind both good and evil.[47] It is recognised that good and evil are absolute truths of moral order, but they are fundamentally categories of this world, *i.e.*, they should be transcended in the *paramarthika* world.[48] Man's fulfilment of his destiny lies in striving for "a good which is never left behind and never superseded".[49]

In this context the significance of the *avataras* is different from what classical thought understand it to be. The *avatara* is not so much the revelation of God as the revelation of the potentialities of man. They show that within the plane of history itself it is possible for man to realise his destiny. Aurobindo who regards the *avataras* as real and not as a sham considers it to be a "parable of evolution".[50] According to him the purpose of the *avatara* "is to help man to discover his own divinity".[51] "It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below".[52] It is "a perfected model of our human existence". While Radhakrishnan does not deny that the *avataras* are divine interventions in history on behalf of *dharma* his major emphasis particularly in his commentary on the *Gita* is on the *avatara* as the fulfilment of man's potential divinity. It is "the demonstration of man's spiritual resources and latent divinity".[53]

This faith in the goodness of man does not take sufficient account of the possibilities for evil in man and in social structures which is responsible for the conflicts and tragedies of history. It must be said that as freedom develops both good and evil develop with it and that the conbict between good and evil may not be resolved within history itself. Moreover, one cannot ignore the fact that human freedom itself is the source of much evil in history which cannot be eradicated from history either by treating it as *avidya* or by relegating it to a secondary plane of reality. If at the end of history evil is not destroyed but merely transformed into the good, the difference

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[47] *The Bhagavadgita*, II, 50 : *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 102 f.

[48] *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 305.

[49] *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 81.

[50] *Letters of Aurobindo*, pp. 493 ff.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 508.

[52] *The Message of the Gita*, pp. 68-69.

[53] *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 32.

between good and evil would be one of degree and not of kind. If there is no vindication of the good either in history or in the end, it would lessen man's moral responsibility.

The End of History : Its *Finis* and Its *Telos*

The classical Hindu view of history described the end as a return to the beginning. In its stress on the inevitable deterioration leading to a *finis*, it minimised the possibility of a *telos* for history. The modern tendency, if one may generalise, is to recognise the *finis*, but at the same time to describe it as some sort of a *telos*. Instead of describing the movement of history as a process of deterioration, it considers it as an evolutionary movement towards spiritual culmination. If the end is merely a return to the beginning, then the process that led up to it would have no significance. But in the modern thinkers this movement towards the end is described as cumulative and purposive. In the final *telos* history will not be annulled, but transformed. Such an integral or evolutionary view of history attempts to make room for the fulfilments both for the individual and for the community. The end, however, is not to be sought beyond history, but within history itself.

The destiny for the individual is not just a liberation from the bonds of nature, but a full realisation of man's divine potentialities. Such individuals are *jivanmuktas* according to Radhakrishnan or *supermen* or *gnostic individuals* in the words of Aurobindo. But such individuals will not seek to escape from the world but will take upon themselves "the burden of redeeming the whole world".[54] The final fulfilment is not thought of in terms of the individual only, but one finds emphasis on the community as well. Various terms are used by some of the major modern thinkers. To Gandhi it is the all-inclusive social order described as *Ramarajya*. Aurobindo described it as *lokasangraha*. He remarks,

> The purpose which the ancient Indian scripture offers to us as the true object of all human action, *lokasangraha*, the holding together of the race in its cyclic evolution, is the constant sense, whether we know it or not, of the sum of our activities.[55]

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[54] *Hindu View of Life*, p. 63 ; see also Aurobindo, *Life Divine*, p. 863

[55] *The Human Cycle*, p. 72.

It is a 'new order of beings and a new earth life' that is to be found in total consummation. Radhakrishnan describes the end of history in terms of the community, not merely in terms of the liberated individuals. It is *brahmaloka,* which being interpreted in his words, is the kingdom of God.[56] While in many statements he talks about the identity of the individual with the *Brahman* he also remarks that what is important is equality with God not identity. "Equality with God (*sadharmya*) and not identity (*sarupya*)", is the characteristic of the end.[57] He conceives of universal salvation, *sarva mukti.* It is "the perfection of humanity",[58] the "transfiguration of the cosmos".[59] "It is the attainment of wholeness, the overcoming of disruption .....which we objectify as *brahmaloka*".[60]

Two observations based on the insights of certain modern thinkers have to be made in this connection. The first concerns the destiny of the individual in history and the second is about the fulfilment or *telos* of history itself.

The individual in history has a two-fold relationship. Living in time, he has a direct relation with eternity and at the same time as part of the community he is also related to the historical process. A onesided emphasis on the vertical relationship endangers the social and historical meaning of individual life. This is the danger of the modern Hindu thinkers when they stress the possibility for the individuals to become *jivanmuktas* or *gnostic individuals* in history through self-effort. Moreover, there is always the danger of death cutting off individual life before he has reached his destiny. As Niebuhr remarks, "Every individual is a Moses who perishes outside the promised land".[61] The possible solution of rebirth to this problem does not really help because it offers no continuity of human memory which is an important element in history.

With regard to the *telos* or fulfilment of history there is a similar problem. What if the end of history should come before it has reached its fulfilment ? The operation of the second law of thermodynamics makes the end of the universe inevitable

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56 *Fragments,* p. 45.
57 *The Bhagavadgita,* p. 76.
58 *An Idealist View of Life,* p. 310.
59 *Fragments,* p. 45.
60 *Ibid.,* p. 45.
61 Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man,* Vol. II, p. 308.

and in this atomic age there is always the danger of an abrupt end to the whole of history. Thus there is the danger of the goal of history whether it is conceived of as *Ramarajya* or *lokasangraha* or *brahmaloka*, being unfulfilled and history coming to an abrupt and capricious end. There is no guarantee or basis for hope in modern Hindu thought that it will be ultimately fulfilled.

To both these problems modern Hindu thought making use of the categories from its own heritage does not provide satisfactory answers.

Conclusion

This has been an attempt to show that certain features of modern Hindu thought as represented by some of its major thinkers point in the direction of a possible view of history which is still in the making. This is particularly true in the interpretation of certain major doctrines of Hinduism. While the impact of Western thought has, to a considerable extent, influenced the *interpretation* of some of these doctrines, the *resources* for the making of a view of history are derived from the Hindu heritage itself as far as can be seen at the present moment. But the question has to be raised and has to be faced by these thinkers and others whether the concept of history can be made significant, and a basis for a full-fledged theology or philosophy of history can be formulated by limiting oneself to the categories of Hindu thought alone. One may also question the adequacy of some of these categories for shaping a responsible view of history. In the last analysis therefore the formation of a modern Hindu view of history is a major test of its own resources. Without the doctrine of creation, judgment and grace, without accepting the healing fact and the redemptive activity of God, no view of history will be adequate to provide man with hope and the assurance of fulfilment.

This is the second of two lectures on *The Hindu View of History* which were delivered by the author in a recent Institute on Trends in Contemporary Religious Thought in India Today held by CISRS in co-operation with the United Theological College, Bangalore. The two lectures are also being published by the CISRS in a single Pamphlet. They are based on his dissertation presented to the Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford, U.S.A., in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

By Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan

The Ramakrishna Movement is an aspect of renascent Hinduism in the 20th century. It emphasises the integral character of Hinduism without deviating from any of its fundamental doctrines or accepting some features of it only and rejecting the others as the Arya Samaj Movement for example did. It is not eclectic in any sense of the term trying to accommodate all doctrines by a sort of an artificial combination. It is well to remember that Sri Ramakrishna and his illustrious disciple, Swami Vivekananda, never intended to propagate a new religion or a new cult. They re-established the old Hindu faith in its fulness and rich variety both in the understanding of their disciples and in the allegiance of their hearts.

At the time when Sri Ramakrishna appeared, the religion of the Hindus was subjected to schisms within and to attacks from without. The Arya Samajist cry of "Back to the Vedas" was raised to save the religion from the hostility of the Mussalmans who waged war against the idols worshipped by its votaries. The Brahma Samaj made compromises with Christianity in its zeal to make its religion look respectable to the foreigners. The educated youth of the day was dazzled by Western civilization and culture and was getting into an attitude of derision for everything Indian.

It was in this predicament that Sri Ramakrishna came to vindicate the integral unity and the comprehensiveness of the Hindu religion. Absolutely unlettered as he was, his was not a theologian's approach to religion. In the transition that he went through from an ultra-orthodox caste-bound Poojari to a Prophet transcending caste by his spiritual eminence (and by that only), the truth of the Vedic dictum that Reality is One, but sages speak of It variously, was brought home with the conviction that was born of its experience. Starting from the dualistic predicament of the devotee and the Deity in his worship of the Divine Mother, he ended with the realisation of the Supreme Absolute in his periods of *nirvikalpa samadhi*. In between, the way was paved with the processes of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* each strengthening and being sustained by the

rest. He saw in his experience that the several paths to Perfection detailed in the scriptures of Hindu religion were all oriented to an identical goal. His *realisation* of the confluence of religions and of religious paths *preceded* his *declaration* of it to his disciples and so, his utterance bore the certificate of certainty. At a time when the followers of each particular creed and sect of the Hindu religion claimed absolute superiority to their doctrines over those of the rest, when new movements were 'balkanising' it, accepting some of its tenets and rejecting others, some of them making unnatural affiliations with other faiths and when alien religions decried the Hindu faith, alike in its tenets and in its practices, as barbarous and outlandish, it is remarkable that Sri Ramakrishna taught that there are many paths to the same goal, that Religion is one though religions may vary. If unity in variety is the plan of the physical universe, why should it be denied in the realm of the Spirit which is the field for the adventure of religion? As Swami Vivekananda put it, "The truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways. The same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints and yet be the same thing." That all these hundred thousand ways of expression and all the hundred different standpoints are not antagonistic to one another will be realised if one fixes his eye on the Truth and not on the forms of expression or the standpoints. That is the meaning of the dictum: *ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti.* The Vedic seers, the Upanishadic sages, the saints and prophets of diverse religions—all bore witness, each in his particular manner, to the same eternal Truth, and conveyed it in diverse ways suited to the climate of their times and the temper of their people. The earnest votaries of the different religions are pilgrims to the Eternal. Their equipage may differ. They may tread different paths. They may speak different scriptures and they may be led by different Prophets. But, seeing that when once they reach the hill-top, the voice of the Preacher and the noise of the Scripture are hushed in the silence of mystic communion, there is no need, nor is it wise, to wrangle all along the route and waste our spiritual powers in wearisome and futile disputation. This is the great lesson that Sri Ramakrishna vouchsafed to the world, a lesson which, it is well to repeat, was not by any means an academic dogma, but was the mature result of the realisation in his own experience of the unity of all religions. His message had a two-fold significance. First, it recon-

ciled the various sects within Hindu religion itself showing that they are facets of the same integral whole. Second, it affirmed the common direction of all religions to the one supreme goal.

Swami Vivekananda speaks of Sri Ramakrishna's message as one of 'universal religion'. This universal religion does not mean one religion only for the whole world. Such a one religion is not necessary even if it were possible and it is not possible even if it were necessary. It means, on the other hand, the recognition of the fact, the need and the utility of a variety of religions in the spiritual economy, that the symbols of religion may vary, but that their significance is the same. This truth born of the realisation of Sri Ramakrishna is fundamental to the Ramakrishna Movement. It affirms the principle of co-existence among religions and tells a Hindu to be a true Hindu, a Christian to be a true Christian and a Mussalman to be a true Mussalman.

A consequence of this teaching is that it discountenances conversion from one religion into another. For, conversion will be both unnecessary and futile if all religions are paths to the same goal. No religion is atheistic. All religions affirm the fact of God and the duty of man to strive for salvation by divinising himself. The means recommended may vary. But every religion, *qua* religion, is and must be acceptable to God. Then, it is a sacrilege to renounce one religion for another. The God of one religion is not different from the God of another religion. That the means recommended by each religion for its followers, if earnestly pursued, help to reach the Supreme has been vindicated by the sages and saints of that religion. And, so, if every kind of means does lead to the same goal, there is no meaning in speaking of one type of means as better or truer than another. And, let it be marked, the mystics of every religion have had the same experience, and speak, if they speak at all, in the same language and to the same purpose. Thus, co-existence of all religions and non-interference in the faith and practices of alien religions are two corollaries from the message of Sri Ramakrishna which the movement has pledged itself to in all its activities.

The Ramakrishna Movement also believes that a universal religion bearing the connotation explained above can be significant only on the basis of a Vedantic philosophy which makes a distinction between the transcendental and the empirical, the

paramarthika and the *vyavaharika.* Religion is the vehicle which carries the finite man in his journey to the Infinite. The finite man and his journey as also the vehicle are parts of the empirical world of space, time and causality, of distinctions and differences while the Infinite is beyond these distinctions and is unaffected by them. The Infinite has no name or form. What has no name and no form can be conceived of and worshipped by any name and in any form. It is only he who has risen to the supreme height of Advaitic *anubhava* that can see the *vyavaharic* religions as neither final nor exclusive. This is the reason why the Ramakrishna Movement carries the message of Vedanta to all thinking minds. It is only from that standpoint that the co-existence of religions can be appreciated. If the monks of the Ramakrishna Order preach the gospel of Vedanta in other countries and to other people, it is not to convert other religionists to Hinduism, but to plead for harmony among religions and to stabilise the votary of each faith in the religion in which he is born. The monks have established centres of the Mission in several parts of the world with the sole purpose of propagating this message of Vedanta.

The present writer is aware that this approach to the subject of religion is absolutely at variance with that of the proselytising and converting religions like Islam and Christianity. He knows that every devout Christian feels it his obligation to declare—for he honestly believes it—that Christ is the only true incarnation of God, that His Gospel is the last and the only Truth, and that he must fulfil the charge that Christ laid on him to carry it to non-Christians and bring them into the Christian fold. This is so completely opposed to the main plank of the Ramakrishna Movement and so uncompromising in the compulsion of its faith, that there seems to be nothing else to do except to say 'let us agree to differ'. At the same time, it is necessary to observe that the follower of Sri Ramakrishna does not reject Christ and His Gospel. But he does not agree that He is the only incarnation of God and that His Gospel, as interpreted by the Christian missionary, is the only and final truth. He also begs leave to add that his accepting Christ as a luminary of the first magnitude in the firmament of religion does not lay on him the obligation to accept the Church and all that it means as a necessary implication of the personality of the Lord Jesus, as the vehicle of His message and as the sole agency which can guarantee his salvation.

And yet, may not one plead that it is high time that the men of the world cried halt to religious hostilities and learnt to recognise differences, understand them and respect them adopting an attitude of 'live and let live'? We are suffering acutely from racial, national and ideological rivalries which only serve to rouse men's passions and to incite them to adharmic ways of life. They do not at all make for Christian feelings of love and charity, they negate every possibility of Peace among men which 'Islam' connotes. There is a need, more urgent now than ever before, to combat the forces of atheism and vanquish them. For this purpose, people of all faiths should combine in an united endeavour without wasting their energies in ridicule and recrimination which, while wastefully sterile of religious merit, is perniciously fertile of the weeds of irreligion. Duty and prudence alike dictate that all religious-minded people should close up their ranks internally and align themselves with men of other faiths on the basis of ideas common to all religions to resist the common foe. The great religions of the world are not mushroom growths of yesterday or today. They all have a great past. Each one of them has been vindicated in the lives of its votaries whom it has disciplined to intense moral and spiritual effort. Every one of them has brought strength, solace and succour to many an anguished heart, counselled every mind in its confusions and has guaranteed salvation to the earnest aspirant. Every religion has been vouched by its numerous saints, mystics who have lived *en rapport* with God. Judged by this pragmatic test, no great religion has failed its people who have striven to live by it sincerely and devoutly. That they all lead to the same Goal is what every pious Hindu reminds himself of when he says in his prayer three times a day, 'Even as the waters that drop from the sky and flow through different beds ultimately reach the sea, so too do obeisances made to all deities reach the Supreme Godhead'. That is what Sri Krishna declared in the context of the *Gita* 'Whoever worships Me in any form I make him steadfast in his devotion'. If Arjuna is the man of all times and lands, Sri Krishna is the God of all religions. The God of the *Gita* is not different in essence from the God of the Bible or the Holy Quran. The realisation of this truth is the bedrock of the Ramakrishna Movement.

CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

By the Rev. George Appleton

The missionary-minded Christian, looking at the recent revival of the ancient religions of Asia, their new confidence and their engagement in world mission, finds a persistent question arising in his mind—What is God doing or saying in this revival: indeed, further, what is God doing in the other religions? A generation or so ago most Christians would have answered quite simply that Christianity is the only true religion and that all other religions are false. But today, when we know so much more about the other religions, the spiritual geniuses who were their founders or interpreters, their scriptures, their mystics and their prayers, and the deep impression they have made on the character of their adherents, the facile negative answer is no longer acceptable. In his earlier book, The *Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* Dr. Kraemer stated that: "God undeniably works and has worked outside the sphere of biblical revelation", and in his later book *Religion and the Christian Faith* he criticises his own earlier effort, "We have far too one-sidedly characterised the religions as human performances and achievements, good and bad, and dealt with them too unilaterally as purely human products. Only in short parentheses have we expressed the opinion that God is somehow active in these religions too." "Somehow active"—the difficulty is to say how, and he who is daring enough to attempt an answer must pray, "Oh, let me see thy footsteps!"

The "imperialism" of the West and the nationalisms aroused in reaction in the East have hitherto prevented a truly religious encounter. Now that the nationalisms of Asia are being satisfied by the achievement of independence and the assurance of its reality, and indigenous cultures are again being valued. Christianity and the other religions can at last meet and speak to one another on spiritual issues. Surely here we find a clue to what God may be doing.

In the past we have learnt what we know of the great religions almost entirely from Western scholars and Christian missionaries. Now, the books of exponents of the other faiths are being written in English, or translated, so that we can learn at first-

hand what people of other religions believe. In the last resort, it is only people from within a religion who can finally tell us about its mind and heart. This apologetic is pressing us to listen and study, to understand the spiritual experience of other people.

We know much more than we did a generation ago of the lives of the founders of the other religions and of the creative influence they have had in the lives of their followers. The study of such great religious personalities as Zoroaster, Buddha and Muhammad is forcing Christians to review their traditional attitudes to other faiths and to ask if their conception of God-in-Christ is large enough to account for all true spiritual activity and all genuine religious experience. St. John and St. Paul were in no doubt, the former with his belief that Christ the Eternal Word was the true light "which lighteth every man," and the latter with his view of God's purpose "to sum up all things in Christ," all spiritual truth as well as all men. Is our interpretation of God's activity big enough to include His operations in other religions wherever there is truth, goodness and love, or is "our God" too small ?

Otto in one of his essays holds that none of the great religions must be allowed to die until it has spoken its ultimate word to mankind. Obviously it must be the interpreters of their own faiths who must define the ultimate word, but friendly observers on the frontiers may perhaps be allowed to ask questions and make suggestions. Dr. James Parkes suggests that God's covenant with Israel at Sinai still holds, and that Israel's contribution to the world is the vision of a dedicated, God-ruled community, with a God-inspired legislation derived from Sinai and constantly being interpreted to meet new conditions. Perhaps the ultimate word of Hinduism is concerned with the relation of the eternal, universal Spirit to the spirit of man. Buddhist writers are emphasising the concept of Nirvana as the goal of Buddhism, a perfection of being, blessing and peace, which can be enjoyed in this life but will only be achieved in its fulness after the recurring cycle of human life, as Buddhists interpret it, is done. Muslims might say that the sovereignty of God is the ultimate word of Islam. Kenneth Cragg, a most sympathetic Christian student on the frontier, would urge on Muslims that within God's sovereignty God must be completely free to decide how He will reveal Himself and by what methods

He will achieve His purpose. If Muslims would accept this they would no longer have the same ground for rejecting the incarnation. What then is the ultimate word of Christianity? The New Testament would answer quite simply "Jesus Christ", the Eternal Word who was always with God and who was always God, who for us men and our salvation became flesh, in whom all things are being summed up.

Perhaps the time is drawing near when Christians and men of other faiths can meet together to explain to each other their ultimate words, to compare their own religious experience, to cross-examine each other in free and genuine encounter and to see where this encounter leads them. Is this to endanger Christ? The Dean of St. Paul's has pointed out that "when we learn of spiritual truth from other religions we are deepening our understanding of the Eternal Christ," and Dr. Raven has stressed that "to find points of contact with Christian doctrine and experience in the writings of the sages of India and China, of Persia and Arabia, this is not to diminish the unique significance of the Christ but to magnify His glory and confirm His claim."

People of other religions have a deep interest in Christ. Hindus are prepared to accept the claim of Jesus that "I and the Father are one," though only in the sense that all men may ultimately say this. Northern Buddhists speak of him as the Buddha of the West, though only as one of a line of Buddhas. The *Qu'ran* speaks of Jesus as the Messiah, as a prophet and messenger of God, and as the Word of God, though not as Lord and God. Many modern Jews have a deep reverence for Jesus, and many others are willing to think of Him as the greatest of all Jews. The attitude of Christians to these partial acceptances has, on the whole, been grudging, critical because they do not go the whole way, instead of welcoming an initiative which gives us the opportunity to talk with others about our own ultimate word.

This interest in Jesus Christ and reverence for Him has had a modifying effect in the other religions. Hindu reformers in the nineteenth century gained much inspiration from a study of His person and teaching, some out of reverence and conscious imitation, others out of criticism and rivalry. Similarly it may be said that the teaching of Jesus has been a factor in the sensitiveness of modern Muslims about the status of women.

Christians who have had sympathetic contact with people of other faiths in recent years will have recognised that the interpretations of the Buddha and of Muhammad by their followers have been influenced by contact with Christians. The presentation of the Christian faith is similarly being influenced by the impact of other faiths: Muslim insistence on the unity of God is making Christians more disciplined in the way they talk about the eternal personal relationships within the Godhead, and the Buddha's teaching about the need to eliminate desire, greed, lust and attachment is challenging us to more thoroughgoing repudiation of self-centredness. These signs of assimilation and conscious imitation have to be evaluated in our thinking about what God is doing.

This does not mean that we may expect other religions to develop in time into Christianity, but that God is at work within them preparing the way for the revelation of Himself in Christ. There is much in all religions which is human thinking only, some of which will finally be seen to be mistaken or incomplete. Christ stands not only as fulfiller of all that is true but also as judge of all religions, including our Christianity. There are pointers to Christ in other religions, but inevitably there must come, for a religious group as well as for the individual, a point at which a leap of faith and commitment has to be made. "Unless a man be born anew he cannot see .... or enter .... the Kingdom of God." When the leap has been made, all that has been good and true in the past will be seen to be preserved and perfected in Christ. The newcomers will find that they are not complete strangers; the Kingdom of Heaven will have for them treasures old and new. And we Christians will understand as never before St. Paul's phrase "the inexhaustible riches of Christ," as we see in other faiths the things that are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely and of good report. Even now, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise let us joyfully recognise it.

The thought of each contemporary expression of Christianity being under the judgment of its Lord is the right spiritual response to the unyielding criticism among exponents of other faiths that Christianity does not measure up to Him. The Jewish view of Jesus is coloured by nineteen centuries of wrong treatment on the part of Christians, of persecutions, forced conversions, expulsions and ostracism, a hostility which was

so ingrained that, when Hitler began his campaign of massacre, the Christian Church failed to raise such a storm of shocked repudiation that would have made even a dictator pause. There are still bitter memories in the Middle East of the Crusades, of which Kenneth Cragg remarks: "The gain of Jerusalem had no merit to supplant the giving of Christ. The Crusades were a mistaken gesture of a disloyal Christendom." In more recent times people in Asia have seen in the Church too close an identification with Western power and culture, while Buddhists are emphatic in their criticism of the failure of the Church to prevent the so-called Christian nations of the West involving mankind in two world-wars, with a threat of a third and more devastating one. Whatever the new encounter between religions is doing, it is challenging the Church to penitence and cleansing for its failure to embody Christ. "Sirs, we would see Jesus" is a legitimate and incontrovertible demand.

Finally, the revival of the other religions is urging us to present Christ as universal and as good news to men *in* their religions. That involves much more humble listening and study, putting ourselves in the place of men of other faiths and trying to think and feel with them, sharing their experience, until at last we can speak not from the point at which we ourselves stand, but from their standpoint, incarnating ourselves in their situation so that what we say will come as welcome gospel. The Church is learning to take this initiative; as it moves over the frontier in love, understanding and glad recognition of truth and goodness, it will discover that Someone is already there.

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RAMANA MAHARISHI – THE MAN AND HIS MISSION

By Dr. P. D. Devanandan

Ramana Maharishi was born in *Tiruchuzhi*, a village not far from Madurai on December 30, 1879. His parents were middle class Brahmins. His early education was acquired in local mission schools in and around Madurai, and it stopped short of the High School forms. There was nothing unusual about his boyhood days. But at the age of seventeen, Venkataraman, for that was his given name, seems to have passed through a strange religious experience. He became more and more interested in temple worship and private meditation. Moreover, he was seized with a tremendous desire to give up all worldly ambitions and become a *sannyasi*. The decision was made quite suddenly on August 29, 1896. He left home one fine morning and made off for Tiruvannamalai, for he felt drawn there by a strange inner compulsion to go to the shrine of Arunachala.

There is no evidence that he had done any much reading of Hindu religious literature at the time. Nor he was he in any sense instructed in the fundamentals of Hindu religious thought. To quote his own words, "I had read no books other than Periapuranam, my bible lessons and bits of Tayumanavar or Tevaram. My notion of God (or *Iswara* as I called the Infinite but Personal Deity) was similar to that found in Puranas. I had not heard then of *Brahman, Samsara*, etc. I had no idea then that there was an essence of Impersonal Real underlying everything, and that Iswara and I were both identical with it. Later at Tiruvannamalai, as I listened to Ribhugita and other works, I picked up these facts and discovered that these books were analysing and naming what I had previously felt intuitively without analysis and name. In the language of the books, I should describe my mental or spiritual condition after the awakening, as *'Suddha Manas'*, or *'Vijnana'* (*i.e.*, the Intuition of the illumined)." Sri Ramana would say that this change came on him because of the working out of *prarabdha karma* over which man has no control. It had to be. The only explanation for it was that what had happened to him at the age of seventeen was a carry-over of the *karma* in a previous existence.

Because of this inner constraint, on reaching Tiruvannamalai, young Venkataraman discarded all possessions, removed the sacred thread, and became lost in deep *samadhi*. The story of his early days in Tiruvannamalai is one of total neglect of body ; most of the time he was wrapt in silence and totally unconscious to his environment. Those who went to see the young Swami were greatly taken up by his austerity. If it were not for the care of some of the older Swamis and other attendants, it looks as though his body would have literally perished from sheer neglect. They shifted him about from shelter to shelter, and periodically fed him with whatever food they could get. During this period, strangely enough, he had an unusual opportunity to study the Tamil classics, almost for the first time. A fellow sadhu who attended to Sri Ramana's needs had developed the habit of heavily plodding through Tamil books on Vedanta which he borrowed from the town library. The young Swami was touched by the tremendous labour which his friend put into these studies. He would take each book, rapidly master its contents and impart the gist of it to the wondering disciple. Obviously the Swami had extraordinary, innate capacity for concentration and memory. One of his biographers writes, "The study of books was not necessary for his (the Swami's) religious contemplation or realisation. That had been achieved already and required no fresh buttress. It was the need to explain its ethical and metaphysical basis and to answer the questions of those who resorted to him, book in hand or after studying books, that made him look into such books. With his naturally clear intellect and retentive memory, assisted by his illuminating experience, he easily understood and explained them to his questioners. It is in the same way he picked up a knowledge of religious books in other languages also, *e.g.*, in Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam, as also by moving closely with those who had considerable mastery of these languages ; and in course of time he was able to express his living thought in writing in all those languages."

Thus passed two years after his sudden disappearance from home. They were years of long and anxious search for his mother and brother. Eventually they discovered his whereabouts and visited him. But no amount of persuasion on their part could succeed in making the Swami break his silence, much less return to his home with them. All they could manage

was in finally making him state on paper his decision. Translated from the original Tamil it would read thus : "The Ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their *prarabdha karma*, destiny to be worked out in this life, resulting from the balance-sheet of actions in past lives. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try how hard you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent."

Meanwhile, the young Swami's fame began to spread. By a shortening of his given name, Venkataraman, came to be familiarly known as Ramana Maharishi. Several people were attracted to him because of his *tapas*, and steadily there gathered around his person a group of devotees. Many of them began asking questions on spiritual matters. To them the young Swami wrote out his answers. For he was still under a vow of silence. Thus began a period of instructions (*upadesa*). Some of these written answers were later put together to form his early works.

For nearly twenty-five years Ramanaswami lived in various caves on the hill of Arunachala, Tiruvannamalai, for all purposes lost to the world about him. Early in 1916 the mother came to Tiruvannamalai and decided to live there near him. Soon after the younger brother also became a *sannyasi* himself and joined what was already the beginnings of an ashram community. The mother stayed with her famous son some six years. She died in 1922, and that year the Swami moved down permanently to the foot of the hill. His residence developed into what came to be known as Sri Ramana Ashram, and there he spent the rest of his life, till the end came on April 14, 1950, about four months after his seventieth birthday.

The remarkable thing about these last thirty years or so of his life was that the Maharishi returned to a normal mode of life. Life in the Ashram became organised around his person. Apart from the people who lived with him on the Ashram premises, a colony grew up around the place in which were housed devout people from far and near who looked upon the Bhagvan, as he comes to be called now, as their own.

Though Ramana Maharishi passed away nine years ago the ashram is there, but no longer what it was like when he was

alive. It has come to be a pilgrim shrine, and also serves as a sort of a centre of information and publicity. The community now resident there is sadly broken up by dissension and dispute over the administration of the property and the income through offerings which continue to come. So we are told, but it may not be true. Nevertheless Ramana Maharishi in no sense established a religious order or founded a movement, but due to his faithful disciples his memory is kept alive and the influence of his teachings is still a real force, though perhaps limited in extent.

Many of the Swami's disciples have written several volumes about his teachings. And they furnish most of the source material for a study of the Maharishi because his own writings are few in number. One of his disciples explains the reason why this is so. "The more you exercise the mind and the more success you have in composing verses the less peace you have. What use is it to acquire such accomplishments if you don't acquire peace ? But if you tell such people this, it doesn't appeal to them ; they can't keep quiet. They must be composing songs. Somehow, it never occurs to me to write a book or compose poems. All the poems I have made were on the request of some one or other in connection with some particular event. Even *Forty Verses on Reality*, of which so many commentaries and translations now exist, was not planned as a book but consists of verses composed at different times and afterwards arranged as a book by Muruganar and others. The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to write them without any one urging me to do so are the *Eleven Stanzas to Sri Arunachala* and the *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*. The opening words of the *Eleven Stanzas* came to me one morning and even though I tried to suppress them, saying, 'What have I to do with these words ?' they would not be suppressed till I composed a song bringing them in ; and all the words flowed easily, without any effort. In the same way the second stanza was made the next day and the succeeding ones the following days, one each day. Only the tenth and eleventh were composed the same day." This statement is quoted at length to show that the writings of the Swami were not laboured compositions which involved exercise of the mind. They are claimed to be in a sense inspired, written because of an inner compulsion.

Of the Maharishi's writings there are in all two prose works, some collections of hymns and two simple Tamil renderings of classics and of the Gita. Of the two prose works one entitled *Self-Inquiry,* contains written instructions (for the Maharishi was maintaining silence in those days) given on various occasions to Sri Seshayyar. The other is entitled *"Who Am I?"* This contains similar written replies given about the same period to Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai. Besides there are collections of what may be described as devotional and doctrinal hymns. The *Five Hymns of Sri Arunachala* are of the devotional type. Similarly two others entitled *Eight Stanzas* and *Eleven Stanzas.* Both these have been rendered into English. The most moving and beloved of the *Five hymns* is the one called *Garland of Hundred and Eight Verses to Sri Arunachala.* This poem has gained considerable recognition among his disciples. The reason is that it is written from the standpoint of the devotee, of the one who is still seeking, and not of the one who has arrived.

Of the doctrinal poems there are mainly two. One is called *Upadesa Saram.* It was originally composed in Tamil, and consists of 30 verses, and the burden of their teaching is that action cannot bring release from action, that *karma* is the mechanism not the cause of creation, and that it is necessary to go beyond action to contemplation. The *Upadesa Saram* was translated by the Maharishi himself into Sanskrit. Now the Sanskrit version is regarded as in a sense a scripture in that it is chanted daily together with the Vedas by all the Maharishi's devotees. The other doctrinal poem is perhaps more famous. It is called *Ulladu Narpadu,* because it consists of 40 verses which deal with the nature of reality. Many of the Maharishi's admirers consider this poem as the most important of his writings, because in a way it is the most complete and profound enunciation of his doctrine. Several commentaries have been written on this treatise.

The third category of writings consists of short poems. One such is *Ekatmapanchakam,* consisting of 5 verses; it deals with the nature of Self. It is said that this poem was originally written in Telugu and then translated by the Maharishi himself into Tamil. In the same category would come two versions in Tamil of two of Sankara's great works: *Vivekachudamani* and *Atma Bodha.* Besides there also exists a

collection of 42 verses from the Gita which the Maharishi regarded as the sum and substance of that great Hindu scripture, as well as the authority of the foundation of his own teaching about the *Advaita*.

It is difficult to sum up the main emphases of his teachings. For one thing he was not in any sense systematic. For another what we know of his teaching is a blend of ecstatic devotion to Arunachala and mystic self-realisation which is essentially incommunicable. Nevertheless he was constantly giving practical guidance to those who sought his help to meet their personal spiritual problems. If we go by the records of his conversation there is no doubt that the burden of what he taught rests foursquare on the foundation principles of the Vedanta. "Sri Bhagavan was not a philosopher", writes Arthur Osborne, "and there was absolutely no development in his teaching. His earliest expositions 'Self-Enquiry' and 'Who Am I?' are no different in doctrinal theory from those he gave verbally in his last years. To him, the recognition of Pure Being as one's own Self was the supreme and ultimate Truth. This truth transcended all other levels of doctrine, without denying at the same time that this same truth may also be perceived at other levels."

That was why to those who found Vedanta too steep a climb, and asked for a more gradual way up based on less direct theory, the Maharishi was accommodating. He recognized that there are people who shrank from the doctrine of the One Self, because it deprived them of a Personal God to whom they could pray and in whom they could take refuge. Both it was necessary that they should feel strongly about their faith and continue in their worship of a Personal God. This applied to all devoted worshippers of God, Incarnate as Rama or Krishna or under any other of His many Aspects. The Maharishi taught that the more devoted and whole-hearted their worship, the sooner it would lead them to the state of mystic union in which Worshipper and Worshipped are merged in One. This was the ultimate Goal, and it must also be the final stage of the religious pilgrimage. "In the end all men must come to Arunachala", was how he put it. In one of his poems he has said: "All religions postulate the three fundamentals: individual, God and world. It is only so long as the individual endures that one says either, 'the One manifests itself as three'

or 'the three are really three'. The supreme state is to inhere in the Self, the ego extinguished." (*'Forty Verses on Reality,'* v. 2.)

The point to be noted is that the teaching of the Maharishi was intensely practical. He did not expound theory for its own sake but only in response to the specific needs and questions of devotees and in order to facilitate their *sadhana* or spiritual practice. He did not instruct his devotees to think out problems but rather to hold thought in abeyance while developing the pure awareness or sense of being which is the Self.

Moreover, the guidance which the Maharishi gave his disciples was directed to each individual, and adapted to his particular condition. "There can be no mass instruction", he is reported to have said once. "It depends on the temperament and spiritual maturity of the individual". This distinction which Ramanaswami made in the function of a Guru is of special interest to a Christian reader in that it points up the *pastoral* ministry of the Guru as apart from his *preaching* ministry. Consequently the relationship between the Guru and the sadhaka is of the nature of a more closer bond than what obtains between a Guru and a chela. So much so it is reported that many visitors to the Ashram were disappointed sometimes that he did not teach in the sense of expounding doctrine. "The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depth of the Self. He never sees any differences between himself and others and he is completely free from false notions of distinction—that he himself is the Enlightened or the Liberated while others around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance". To an European disciple, Major Chadwick, the Maharishi once remarked, "The Guru sees no difference between himself and others. For him all the *Gnanis* are one with himself, so how can a *Gnani* say that such and such is his disciple ? But the unliberated one sees all as multiple, he sees all as different from himself, so to him the Guru-sadhaka relationship is a reality, and he needs the grace of the Guru to waken him to reality. For him there are three ways of initiation, by touch, look and silence".

This last statement is according to long-accepted Hindu view of three modes of *diksha*, typified by the bird which needs to sit on its eggs in order to hatch them ; the fish which needs only to look at them, and the tortoise which needs only to

think of them. In every case, the sadhaka is possessed in consequence by the conviction that the Guru has taken over; that henceforth the Guru was in charge, he was guiding. A Dutch devotee, Mr. L. Hartz, expressed a fear to the Maharishi that on leaving the Ashram he might weaken. The reply was, "Even if you let go of Bhagavan (*i.e.*, Ramana Maharishi) Bhagavan will never let go of you." And there is the case of another devotee, despondent at lack of spiritual growth saying, "I am afraid if I continue like this I shall go to hell." And the Maharishi assured him, "If you do Bhagavan will go after you and bring you back".

'Surrender' and 'devotion' to the Guru is with a view to *sat sangh,* 'association with one who has realized Sat or Being'. This association did not necessarily involve any verbal communication. Devotion to the Guru turned the mind of the sadhaka inwards to the Self he manifested, just as the quest of the Self within awakened unbounded love of the Self manifested in the Guru. Thus in a very real sense the Guru is equated with God. It is through the Guru the sadhaka experiences the uplifting and transforming power of God's grace.

But the special *sadhana* which the Maharishi imparted was the method of *vichara* based on the persistent question repeatedly addressed to oneself, "Who Am I?" "Through this enquiry", the Maharishi once told an intellectual who had sought his advice, "all mental operations are eventually destroyed, though this enquiry is also a mental operation ..... Whatever you do then, you do without egoism, that is without the feeling 'I am doing this'. When a man reaches that state even his own wife appears to him as the Universal Mother. True *bhakti* is surrender of the ego to the Self". To the question, "How long should one go on with this enquiry", the answer was, "As long as there is the least trace of impulses in your mind to cause thoughts. So each time thought rears its head crush it with this enquiry. To crush out all thoughts at their source is called *vairagya* (dispassion). So *vichara* (self-enquiry) continues to be necessary until the Self is realized.

The Maharishi disapproved of the desire for heavenly visions and supernatural powers, and he preferred householders to strive for self-realization in the context of family and professional life. The Swami is reported to have said at one time: "Renunciation does not mean outward divestment of clothes

and so on or abandonment of home. True renunciation is the renunciation of desires, passions and attachments ..... When you really feel that equal love for all, when your heart has so expanded as to embrace the whole of creation, you will certainly not feel like giving up this or that ; you will simply drop off from secular life as a ripe fruit does from the branch of a tree. You will feel that the whole world is your home." Or again, in another context, the Swami gave advice : "The one obstacle is the mind, and it must be overcome whether in the home or the jungle. If you can do it in the jungle why not in the home ? Therefore why change the environment ? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment."

The devotees of Ramana Maharishi were ordinary folk for the most part. Not all of them were by any means scholars or intellectuals. Most of them were Hindus, but not all. There were a number of non-Hindus and non-Indians, some of whom resided in the Ashram for a length of time while many came from distant countries on brief visits. Paul Brunton, Major Chadwick, Arthur Osborne, S. S. Cohen, M. Friedman, Mrs. Taleyarkhan (Parsi) and Dr. Hafiz Syed are some of the well-known followers of the Maharishi. They have written books not only to expound his teachings but to testify to his influence on their own personal religious life. Their common witness is that they have found in the teachings of Ramana Maharishi the answer to their personal religious problems. This would seem to be true also of most of the Hindu sadhakas that found in the Bhagavan their Guru.

The stand they would all take with regard to the Guru's teachings is that they have personally found them satisfactory in that they have adequately answered their questions. Also none of them would hesitate to affirm that their religious certitude is to a very great extent determined by their personal attachment (their 'surrender' and 'devotion') to the Guru. None of them raises the issue of validity of religious truth. So much so one wonders whether the real concern in the religious quest of most people is the truth for which their belief stands or for its personal adequacy in meeting their individual need. This seems to be the basic theological issue between the Christian and the Hindu : the validity and the value of religion. We must not, however, hastily conclude that Hindus are not concerned about the validity of religious doctrines, that they do

not care whether what they believe in is false or true. As I understand it to Hinduism truth is a state of being rather than a state of cognition. That is why the primary emphasis is on the *experience* of reality and, because reality cannot obviously be equated with what is historically conditioned, it is argued that of its very nature experience of reality is transmundane, supernatural, timeless. We must also take note, at the same time, that the Hindu does not say that the historical is totally unreal, that the natural is altogether unsubstantial and that what happens in time is wholly meaningless. It is true that there is danger of overstatement, and consequent possibility of error. On the other hand, the evidence seems to point to the fact that what we call renaissance in living Hinduism is in great measure due to the effort of Hindu thinkers to counter this tendency to overstatement. For instance that belief in *karma* is not the same as belief in 'destiny' or of 'fatalism' ; that the doctrine of *Maya* does not stand for illusion ; that the Vedanta view of Reality as *satchitananda* does not obviate the need for worship of God. Is it not also possible that we understate what they overstate ?

Having said this, in fairness to both the Hindu and the Christian, it should also be admitted that there are fundamental differences on which agreement can only be reached by compromising the integrity of our religious affirmations.

The conception of the Guru is not easy for the Christian to understand because his understanding of the *saint* is not that of one who has arrived, but of one who is still journeying home. He may be willing to admit that the saint is a better man than himself but a man nonetheless. Moreover, Christian anthropology is very positive in its affirmation that although man is made in the image of God it is the likeness of God which is being restored in him by the working of the Holy Spirit. To the Christian this cannot be the same as the realization of identity with the Ultimate Self or the Brahman.

The *vichar sadhana* is in a sense similar, if not the same, in the case of both the Hindu and the Christian. The question "Who am I ?" may be the same, but the answer in each case is different because the nature and destiny of man is visualized in very unlike manner. Nevertheless it seems true that, as at no other time in human history, as mankind everywhere we are confronted by the question "What am I and whither am I

bound ?" That question may well be the starting point of the religious pilgrimage : but it would also seem necessary that any earnest inquirer should also take into account the answer which contemporary social sciences have to offer so that our understanding is enriched by the natural facts of experience as well as by the intuitions of faith in the supernatural. Then we will have reckoned with the concept of the human person in relation with other persons and the Person. Here scriptural teaching and the findings of the sciences are found to accord.

On the other hand, there are values in the teachings of Hindu Gurus which we may well take seriously to heart. There is the concept of the Guru itself as one through whom the saving power of God is transmitted. These are days when much is being said and written about the communication of faith. The claim that may well be more closely examined is the possibility of God communicating through "touch, look and silence" of His Ministers (a point raised many years ago by the late Mr. P. Chenchiah) especially in these days when Christian witness has come to be almost exclusively confined to what Hendrick Kraemer calls "vocal communication".

This leads us to consider another point which was raised earlier, the "pastoral function" of the Guru, *upadesa* not in the sense of instruction given to a congregation of people as most sermons are meant to be but individual guidance in the practice (the *sadhana*) of the Christian life. We seek converts but we do not pay much attention to the nurture of the Christian sadhaka, not in the *sat sangh* of the sadhaka with the Guru as 'one who has realized *sat* or Being', but in the *sat sangh* of the 'communion of saints', the fellowship of forgiven sinners, the local manifestation in a very real sense of the Body of Christ. Can there be a more suggestive description of *ecclesia* than this of *sat sangh* ? Can it be that the meaning which Christian thought and experience give to the word 'conversion' is made a little more clear to Hindus in the light of this claim that the Church to the Christian is the *sat sangh* where the 'association' is not only of men of similar convictions but of men mastered by the supreme conviction that their Guru is the ever living Christ Who makes a total claim on their allegiance ?

"THE CALL OF THE MINARET"*

A Review by the Rev. Ian H. Douglas

In the cultural centre of the Urdu-speaking intelligentsia of the city of Hyderabad a large audience of Muslims had been listening attentatively to the lecture by Canon Cragg. The Chairman, an elderly Muslim scholar of renown, complimented the speaker on his discerning and fair presentation of contemporary Islam. Then a questioner asked Dr. Cragg his personal opinion concerning one point he had dealt with. Instead of seizing the opportunity to argue for the superiority of Christianity Dr. Cragg smiled and quietly commented that he had been giving the Muslim point of view, but that he was a Christian. Here was a striking demonstration of a much more effective witness to Jesus Christ than any polemic would have been in the situation. And this is the spirit which breathes throughout Kenneth Cragg's remarkable book *The Call of the Minaret.*

Let a Muslim reviewer give his testimony.....

> .... the author is successful in avoiding pronouncements of approval or disapproval on this or that aspect of Islam. He presents to his readers the premises of Islam itself, saying: "Come, see for yourselves."
> .... The book contains little on the theme of the superiority of Christianity over Islam. Indeed this idea is hardly even implicit in a single sentence of the work. It is, however, evident that the author is writing as a devoted Christian and that he seeks to offer a manual for the Christian missionary expression of the Church today. His accent becomes at times passionate. ....Yet without restrained emotion and true passion no religious work can be written. The restraint which characterises this work makes it an eminent representative of literature dealing with interreligious relationships.—(*The Muslim World*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 40.)

In the Preface Dr. Cragg records his "ambition for understanding" and underlines the Christian "obligations of aware-

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* Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, Oxford University Press. 1956.

ness, witness and concern". Again and again he emphasises the need to appreciate Islam as the devout Muslim does before there can be hope of a Christian relationship. The aim is to understand ; not to refute. "The truth is not rivalry but relevance." The Christian "must learn to be in some measure the participant. As the bearer of 'the Word made flesh', he must strive to enter into the daily existence of Muslims, as believers, adherents, and men". But there is no hiding the fact that this means hard work. The study and patience involved may make bazaar preaching, even at physical risk, seem an easy escape.

> For here indeed Islam is a harsh world, harsh to some of the Christian's tenderest convictions, a world that disallows the Cross and strips the Christian's Master of His most tremendous meaning. Yet the harshness has to be transcended, for much of it is well intentioned. And in any event the story to be told is only safe in the custody of those for whom every antagonism is an opportunity. For that, precisely, is the heart of the story itself.

In the history of Christian-Muslim relations this is surely an epoch-making book. Of course the inadequacies of the controversial methods of the last Century have long since been realised. But it is probably true to say that not until Cragg has there been the advocacy of such whole-hearted sympathy with Islam as an expression of profound Christian conviction. Syncretism we have known and the attempt to find a common validity in all religions. But here is none of that. In another respect, too, Dr. Cragg is outstanding, for he combines the brilliant mind of the scholar with the sensitivity to the actual human situation of the serving evangelist.

The book opens with a short First Part entitled "The Contemporary Setting". Any student of Religions reading its account of "Islam Since 1945" should recognise the unique situation of Islam and the impossibility of classifying it together with Hinduism and Buddhism in any general descriptions of "resurgent religions". If by revival of religion we mean that many, who were hitherto only nominal adherents of a particular faith, have come into a new appreciation of its spiritual power, this is not the nature of the contemporary resurgence of Islam. For it was precisely personal religion which kept Islam alive during the dark years when most of the Muslim

world was under alien rule. Nor do we see in Islam an ancient faith with over a millenium and a half's history which had lain dormant for centuries but which has reacted to the impact of the West in a new vigorous assertiveness. For Islam is of relatively recent date and has never ceased to be religiously assertive. Part of the difference lies in the fact that Islam was from the beginning both a "state" and a "religion" so that it was a fundamental contradiction for Muslims to be under non-Muslim rule. By the same token political independence in Muslim lands was in itself a resurgence of Islam, and not merely a factor in resurgence as in the case of Hinduism and Buddhism. Secondly, in any East-West classification of faiths Islam belongs, not with Asia, but with the West whose Hebrew and Greek heritage it shares. So that its relationships with Christianity, which it alone of the world's religions took account of and claimed to supersede, have necessarily been of a different order. Dr. Cragg, then, sees "self-responsibility as the great new political fact of almost all Islam", a situation which represents "a recovery of the positive values of the Islamic past" and produces a "deep sense of vindication, as well as of new opportunity". Secondly there is manifest a "new dimension of individual life", an active participation in affairs where previous generations would have been inarticulate and passive. Islam is passing through change at a bewildering pace. Communism is challenging its claim to meet man's economic needs ; there is, in at least some scholars, a readiness to submit to scholarly criticism and to engage in colloquy with Christians ; applied technology is threatening to produce "a slow recession of the sense of God". In general, however, it is valid to speak of the resurgence of Islam. But not in the same terms as of Hinduism and Buddhism.

> The quality of this generation's Islam differs subtly from that of its predecessors. In terms of freedom and openness it may be a difference for the better ; in terms of piety and discipline, for the worse.

With Part II, "Minaret and Muslim", we enter the heart of the book. The four main phrases of the muezzin's call to prayer —the call of the minaret which gives the book its title—are used as a basis for the presentation of Islam.

> "..... I bear witness that there is no God except God ;"
> "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of God."

"Come ye unto prayer."
"Come ye unto good ....."

One suspects Dr. Cragg of putting into the last phrase, whatever the linguistic justification of his paraphrase may be, a far richer content than any but the most scholarly of Muslims would think of! ("Alert yourselves in mind and will to the authentic well-being of Muslim humanity, achieved within the Islamic order" can scarcely be the "meaning of the call" in the mind of any actual muezzin.) But otherwise the four phrases lend themselves readily to the consideration of "God", "Muhammad", "Prayer and the Religious Life in Islam" and "The Islamic Order for Human Society". Then under those headings Dr. Cragg manages to fit in, in one place or another, everything else which is of significance to his readers. The arrangement is not intended to be the most logical or systematic. The author clearly states his reasons for the choice, the most important of which is the appeal to the imagination. "We do not merely aim at a resumé of Muslim belief and practice. We take it in its own most intimate and inward imperative because we seek to know it, as far as may be, from within." His success in just this is one of the distinctions of this brilliant book. This reviewer can testify that, in spite of having heard and read presentations of Islam by many others, and having had years of personal contact with Muslims, his first reading of this Part of *The Call of the Minaret* gave him a new understanding, a new appreciation, and a new sympathy, and convinced him of how essential such an attitude is. It has been said that no would-be Christian witness to those of another faith can consider himself fully qualified until he has felt the attractive pull of that faith himself. This is strong medicine and many of us would have difficulty in taking it from anyone of lesser Christian conviction and devotion than Kenneth Cragg's. But this reviewer must go on to testify that a recent re-reading of this book surprised him with the outspokenness of its Christian assertions. And yet this is but a proof of the author's insistence that the will to positive relationship with Muslims must be genuine—no feigned interest or compromise by vitiating motives—and that this involves bringing "in all honest openness, the faith by which we ourselves live and understand". Indeed he says, of the Christian who seeks to meet Islam in the fullest sense,

> The degree of his sincerity in his Muslim relationships will be the measure of his loyalty inwardly to the

> insights by which he himself religiously proceeds .... Inevitably sincerity of conviction means that the insights of faith become the norms by which the contents of other faiths must be judged.

As if Part II did not have distinction enough, the final Part on "Minaret and Christian" adds further lustre. Here is the muezzin's call to the Christian to

> face the demands the minaret makes upon the Muslim .....(to) take with a more objective seriousness the concepts within the summons, to go deeper than interest, prudence or policy into areas of spiritual communication ..... (to) reach that realm (where) we are beyond Islamics only and beyond external common interests into true mutuality.

The chapters of this final section elaborate "The Call to Understanding", "The Call to Service", "The Call to Retrieval".

> Islam developed in an environment of imperfect Christianity....The state of being a stranger to the Christian's Christ has been intensified by further failures of love and loyalty on the part of institutional Christianity in the long and often bitter external relations of the two faiths through the centuries.
>
> It is for these reasons that the call of the minaret must always seem to the Christian a call to retrieval. He yearns to undo the alienation and to make amends for the past by as full a restitution as he can achieve of the Christ to Whom Islam is a stranger. The object is not, as the Crusaders believed, the repossession of what Christendom has lost, but the restoration to Muslims of the Christ whom they have missed .....
>
> .....We must avoid the easy temptation to vindication ....misunderstandings will be set right, not so much by argument as by a constructive effort to discover and correct the sources from which they come. Assertiveness....is not overcome by its like, but rather by the patiently objective. Here are not simply arguments to be refuted: here is a tragedy to be redeemed. What matters is not that men have thought ill of Christianity but that they have forfeited the Christ .....

> .....If one sought a single justification for the Christian mission to Islam one might well be content to find it in the Quranic picture of Jesus of Nazareth. It is not simply what the picture fails to tell, vast as that is, but also what it disallows. Worse than the silences are the vetoes. A partial portrait can be filled out. But what if it has negated in advance its own completion ? For love of Christ retrieval must be made.

This is the chapter in which the Muslim reviewer already quoted sensed the "passionate accent" without which no religious work can be written. But of the next chapter, "The Call to Interpretation", he wrote that it deserved to be translated into the major Muslim languages and given the widest circulation. Likewise Canon Max Warren described the chapter as "a synopsis of systematic theology which one covets for every ordinand preparing for the ministry" (*C.M.S. Newsletter* No. 192). And both these eulogies are well deserved. Here we can only quote from the paragraphs which introduce the various sections on the Christian Scriptures ; The Person of Jesus ; The Cross ; The Doctrine of God ; and The Church.

> .....What is worthy of all acceptation must be capable of all acceptation. The interpreter refuses to believe that the language of God in Christ is beyond anyone's understanding given patience, lowliness, resourcefulness —and the Holy Spirit. Like every wise translator he will be indefatigable in seeking his clues in all areas of life. He will be patient with all contrariety, knowing that wherever there is opposition there is also relevance .....The grounds of misunderstanding must be made the theme of a more patient exposition. Every difficulty must be made an opportunity.

The final chapter of "The Call to Patience" presents what is perhaps the most challenging suggestion of all. In view of the way Muslims regard Christian Baptism as a treasonable act against the community, with the result that the baptized convert is cut off from any possibility of witness to his own people, Dr. Cragg suggests the postponement of Baptism in the hope that larger units than the individual may eventually come into the Church. This is not to be confused with the idea of witnessing by life rather than by lip. Rather is the object the continuance of the possibility of the maximum witness among his

own people by the Muslim who has come to know God in Christ. The case is stated with great clarity so that there should be no possibility of its being misunderstood by Christian readers. This particular expression of Christian patience surely deserves a fair trial.

Those who follow the argument of *The Call of the Minaret*, and are persuaded by it, will not only find the way hard in seeking the relationship advocated with Muslims. They must be prepared for opposition from fellow-Christians who are not so persuaded. Dr. Cragg mentions in passing the difficulties involved in trying to work with "sects on the wing of Western Christianity". An article elsewhere in this issue raises some of the questions which must concern him in conversation with other Christians who are certainly not in that category. So whether leading Christian theologians, "sects on the wing", or just average Church-workers long accustomed to other ways, they too are a practical test for the principles which Dr. Cragg has so ably enunciated.

One other question concerns the ordinary member of the Church. How are the insights of *The Call of the Minaret* to be shared with him ? It is a large book and just occasionally the language becomes somewhat involved. True, it would be a more just comment on most of the book to say that every sentence is pregnant with meaning. But even this represents a difficulty for those not accustomed to such writing. And perhaps its argument could have been clarified by the judicious use of sub-headings, even those few which are found in the list of Contents might have helped had they been incorporated in the text. The one chapter which does have some such headings is the most lucid in the book, that on "The Call to Interpretation". Perhaps the question can be stated thus : Is there a call for a briefer manual presenting the essential ideas, for the sake of those whose English is more limited, and for the sake of translation into other languages ? Or perhaps, in view of the sense of hopelessness which seems to characterise the Church where active concern for the Muslims is lacking, it is as well to rely on existing Introductions to Islam for the first stages of the much needed education. Then, when a more confident attitude has developed, those with this minimal knowledge of Islam will be ready for Cragg.

If *The Call of the Minaret* is indeed as epoch-making as this review has suggested; it will take time for its principles to be demonstrated in action. Perhaps we may see such a demonstration in that the learned professor who, as a Muslim, reviewed Dr. Cragg's book so carefully, was very recently baptized into the fellowship of the Church of Jesus Christ.

THE CALL TO UNDERSTANDING

By the Rev. John B. Carman

Kenneth Cragg's *The Call of the Minaret* is far more than a scholarly interpretation of Islam. Like the call of the muezzin which it seeks to understand, it is a call to a great task. "This book," says Dr. Cragg, "is meant as a humble invitation to a great invitation". "Can we so become aware of Islam as to enter into all its implications for the Christian ?".[1]

Can this invitation be broadened, or at least repeated, to summon Christians to such a meeting with Hindus or Buddhists ? That is the question I should like to raise here. In asking it, however, I do not want to diminish or obscure the urgency of Cragg's specific invitation to a meeting with Muslims. We need that urgent summons here in India, where we are in daily contact with Muslims and daily hear "the call of the minaret". Fortunately, we do not have the legacy of bitterness between Christians and Muslims which is present in some other countries, but the good relations are on a very superficial level : beneath the surface is a heavy layer of indifference and unconcern. Yet this very indifference makes it necessary to relate this summons to meeting with Islam to another weighty responsibility of Christians in India—to come into real encounter with Hindus.

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The Christian, says Cragg, is called to "attain, by God's grace, an authentically Christian relation to the mosque and its world".[2] The first aspect of this relation is *understanding*. This begins with a scholarly study of classical Islam and the more recent expressions of the Muslim mind but goes beyond the merely academic to a personal relationship, in order to understand the inner life of contemporary Muslims, in order to grasp what their faith actually means to them. But understanding of this personal sort draws us to something beyond understanding—a concern to help meet the pressing human needs in the Islamic world ; this is the call to *service*. Thirdly, Cragg maintains, the Christian is called to *retrieval*. "He yearns to undo the alienation and make amends for the past by as full a restitution as he can achieve of the Christ to whom Islam is a stranger".[3] If Christ remains such a stranger to Islam, "the

fault is plainly ours".[4] "The surest way to repair what we have been is to tell what Christ is."[5] "Must not the emasculated Jesus of the Qur'ān be rescued from misconception, and disclosed in all his relevance....?"[6] Thus, "Retrieval leads into Interpretation".[7] It is this task of *interpretation* which is "the amazing reality behind and within the Christian mission in the world".[8] "Our duty is to carry over the Word which God has uttered, to be the translators of His speech into the language, the idiom, and the minds of ordinary men."[9] The "translator" must be continually resourceful; he must be humble, and he needs to be both persistent and patient. This call to *patience*, then, is the final dimension of the summons to meeting at the mosque. By heeding these calls the Christian may fulfil "the obligations belonging to Christian conviction—obligations, that is, of awareness, witness, and concern".[10] The central call, in Cragg's mind, is clearly the "call to interpretation", an interpretation which "involves a person-to-person relationship".

> We are called to a tender solicitude for the minds and wills of men. The Word which is Christ has to come into their vocabulary. So we must study what they mean, in all the moods, the overtones and undertones of their existence. It is our life-task to make bridges into their minds. This means being near enough to be heard.....[11]

What Cragg says about these five "calls" is applicable to the meeting with Hindus as well as with Muslims, for it is grounded in the evangelistic obligation of the Christian Church itself. The only "call" which is peculiarly determined by the nature of Islam and by the history of its relations with Christianity is the "call to retrieval". But even here, there is a similar call in relation to modern Hinduism, where a partial image of Christ is highly respected and even worshipped along with other deities. Here too, we must confess that "the fault is plainly ours", and here too, Christ can only be retrieved by presenting Him in His fulness, by preaching the whole Gospel and demonstrating the Lordship of Christ in His Church.

Cragg rightly sees one important goal of understanding in the enlarged possibilities it creates for the effective interpretation of the Gospel—effective because we are able to convey the meaning of Christ in terms of the meanings which men already know. However, Cragg gives much less attention to two other

goals of such understanding. One is the importance of understanding our non-Christian neighbors in order to be able better to live and work together with them in the same secular community. The other is the determination by the growing Christian Church in a non-Christian culture of the elements of that culture which may wisely be incorporated into its own life as well as the recognition of those elements which need to be resisted by the Church. Cragg does make one striking statement somewhat along these lines : "Since all nations, including the Muslim, are to bring their glory and honor into the Kingdom, we must be ready for the unexpected when Christ comes into His own in men's hearts and cultures. All that Christ will be to Muslims, only Muslims can declare."[12] We assume this means Muslims who have entered the Church. Since there are as yet so few of these, it is understandable that Cragg does not devote more attention to this subject, but here in India there are many who have entered the Church from Hinduism. It is their responsibility to bring the tretsures of the "Hindu Nation" to Christ and so to discover that they are giving back what already belongs to Him.

Cragg does not have a separate chapter on the "call to Christian evaluation". This does not mean that evaluation is absent, but it is combined with the tasks of understanding, retrieval and interpretation. There is much to be said for not engaging in evaluation of another religion as an end in itself, yet we need to be aware when we are evaluating, and we must be able to distinguish, and sometimes even to separate, our theological assessments of another religion from our effort to understand it and from our attempts to interpret the Christian faith in terms understandable to its followers. Here we must recognize a major difficulty in assessing the wider relevance of Cragg's book. He does not discuss his evaluations separately, and at a number of points he introduces important theological judgments without adequately explaining or defending them.

* * * * * *

Is the kind of understanding of Islam which the Christian is called to pursue either possible or desirable in the case of other religions ? This is obviously a question which Cragg does not specifically consider, but there is strong indication that his answer would be Yes. We believe that Christ belongs to all, that He is relevant to the needs of every man. When we act in obedience

to our conviction of Christ's universal relevance, we discover the nature of that relevance in each particular case. And that, in turn, helps us more fully to discover Christ Himself.

> One discovers that all other religious faiths are diversely and variously concerned with just those areas and issues of life and death, of time and mystery, with which the Christian faith is dealing. Parallels are plentiful in the interrogative aspects of religions. They are present also, fruitfully, in the indicative aspects....points of meeting also offer themselves in the imperatives of religion. The uniqueness of what the Christian finds in Christ does not mean or argue the exclusiveness of everything Christian. On the contrary, the ruling concepts of Christianity, where the human is the vehicle of the Divine and God and men are in living relation, in law and revelation, in compassion and rebellion, necessarily recur, sometimes in articulate, often in inarticulate, form in the religious faiths of the world. He who goes out humbly with Christ in the world of all races will perpetually discover the multiple, but constant, relevance of what he takes. Moreover, the transactions of such expression are mutual....it takes a whole world to understand a whole Christ.[13]

Here we find a recognition of the real parallels between religions —in their doctrines and duties as well as in their questions— and these parallels are ascribed to the universal relevance of Christ. We are left wondering, however, why "the ruling concepts of Christianity....*necessarily recur*....in the religious faiths of the world". What is the basis of Cragg's confidence that wherever there is contrariety, there are likely to be clues ?[14]

Cragg interprets "Christ, the Word of God", to mean that Christ "in Himself constitutes what God wants to say"; He is God engaging in speech. In the Incarnation God has used "the image of human life" and "uttered Himself in terms already within our ken". All this is certainly true, and it is well to emphasize that "we are called to be interpreters of God's interpretation of Himself".[15]

But that Christ is the "Word of God" means something more than this, and it is this "more" that Cragg unfortunately neglects. It is unfortunate because it is here we find the ultimate

basis for what he says about "clues" and the "universal relevance" of Christ. That Christ is the Divine Logos means that He is the Word in a very special sense: He is the Divine Utterance by which the universe was created, was called into being. When early Christians called Christ the Logos, they wished to emphasize that He who had rescued them from the powers of darkness was none other than He through Whom all things were made. They believed that their redemption was nothing less than a new Creation by the Lord of heaven and earth. God's Eternal Word, who became man in Jesus of Nazareth, is related to the "word of God" which we must preach, for where we have effectively preached the Gospel, there Christ is present. But we dare not say that where we have not preached, or have so witnessed that the Gospel has not been understood, there Christ the Divine Word is absent. No, He is always there with men, whether or not we are faithful in our witness to Him. He has created them, He has redeemed them, and He has always been their true Light; that is why we may discover the universal relevance of the message we preach.

* * * * * *

The relation between Christianity and all other religions is in one sense the same, but Cragg believes that there is also a peculiar relation between Christianity and Islam.

> In his definitive fashion, the great lexicographer, Samuel Johnson, once remarked that outside Islam and Christianity all else was barbarism. One need not subscribe to this outrageous dictum in recognizing the immense role in human affairs played by these two great monotheisms of the Near East. Both stand heir in part to the earlier traditions of Judaism but each has far surpassed the latter in the extent and variety of their diffusion. . . . For they constitute two predominant households of faith in a world increasingly alive to the dangers of its disunity.[16]

In spite of his disclaimer of Dr. Johnson's "outrageous dictum", one is left with the impression that Cragg believes it contains a kernel of truth, but it is not clear just what that truth is. He does not say that Christianity and Islam are the only two "monotheisms" or the only two "households of faith" in the world. He does say that all religious systems at the present time have an obligation to each other, an obligation to meet one another spring-

ing from their very nature "and their ancient sense of the metaphysical oneness of humanity".[17] But he goes on to say, "In this vocation there can be no doubt that Christianity and Islam have each a crucial place....Their duty in the total situation of today must in large measure hinge upon their duty to each other".[18] This would seem to imply that the responsibility of Christians to come into real encounter with Hindus would depend upon their prior meeting with Muslims. But we are not told why this should be so, nor is it clear what precisely it is that distinguishes Islam from Judaism and from other non-Christian religions.

* * * * * *

To seek light on Cragg's understanding of the *distinctive* relation between Islam and Christianity, we turn to a point which is crucial to his whole approach, the use of the name God to refer to the *Allāh* of Islam.

> Since both Christian and Muslim faiths believe in One supreme sovereign Creator-God, they are obviously referring when they speak of Him, under whatever terms, to the same Being. To suppose otherwise would be confusing. It is important to keep in mind that though the apprehensions differ, their theme is the same. The differences, which undoubtedly exist, between the Muslim and the Christian understanding of God are far-reaching and must be patiently studied. But it would be fatal to all our mutual tasks to doubt that One and the same God over all was the reality in both. Those who say *Allāh* is not "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" are right if they mean that He is not so described by Muslims. They are wrong if they mean that He is other than the One Christians so understand. The source of the confusion of thought encountered here is that to say who God is necessarily goes beyond saying that He is. If men agree on the second what they say relates to the same time or subject, even if they differ markedly as to the first. No faith or believer, of course, can say *that* God is without being involved to some degree in *what* He is. But unless there is radical inconsistency within the very concept of existence itself as applied to God—the sort of difference which does not obtain between Muslim and Christian—they are speaking

> of the same subject....Predicates about God may differ widely but....God as the subject of differing predicates is the same subject.[19]

From reading this paragraph we should hardly surmise that we are here touching a subject of longstanding and still vigorous controversy among Christian students of Islam. Among those who agree with Cragg's conclusion, different people have advanced quite different reasons. Many have held that Islam has knowledge of God the Creator by the "light of natural reason". Other Christians have ascribed such true knowledge of God as Islam possesses to Muhammed's partial knowledge of the Bible and of Jewish and Christian beliefs. Others have thought that Muhammed was a great mystic and came thus to a knowledge of the one true God. Then, too, the "common sense" argument has been used that God and *Allāh* are obviously simply the names in two different languages for one and the same Being. Cragg does not make clear on which, if any, of these arguments he bases his position.

Cragg's basic assertion is that if men agree *that* God is, even marked differences as to *who* He is do not alter the fact that they are talking about the same subject. There is one important qualification : "unless there is radical inconsistency within the very concept of existence itself as applied to God". However, there is not this sort of difference between the Christian and the Muslim understanding of God's existence, Cragg maintains.

What is here called, "the source of confusion of thought", is actually the basis of a very real and perplexing problem whose solution is far from obvious. That problem is precisely this "that to say who God is necessarily goes beyond saying that He is". Cragg rightly says that "no faith or believer, of course, can say *that* God is without being involved to some degree in *what* He is". He is involved at least to the degree of "the very concept of existence itself as applied to God". This simply brings us into another perennial problem of theology and philosophy. How much do we have to say about *what* God is (His nature or essence) to be able to say *that* He is (His existence) ? There is also, for Christian theology, the related problem : how can we separate, even in thought, the existence of the Divine Subject from all the Divinely revealed predicates which indicate His character ?

The common belief of Christianity and Islam that Cragg points to is the belief "in One supreme sovereign Creator-God". Even if we grant that this is true, we still must ask how it happens that Muslims and Christians have this common belief. And is this the minimum concept of God's existence necessary to know that we really believe in one and the same God, or is it much more than that ? Cragg says that the Christianity with which Muhammed came into contact, although seriously defective, gave him "the most fundamental concepts in his vocation and in subsequent Islam, a sure monotheism and a prophetic mission which a Divine relationship of revelation, through a Scripture, created a community of faith".[20] When Cragg comes to the interpretation of the Christian belief in God, he tries to do so "as far as possible in terms which the Muslim already understands : the double belief about God—that He reveals and that He is sovereign".[21] There are also many other partial parallels to Christian belief which can be clues for the effective interpretation of the Gospel. But with respect to the Cross, the apparent parallels merely bring out that "the Cross has no parallel". Here, "perhaps the very contrast is the clue".[22]

* * * * * *

What implications does Cragg's decision to call *Allāh* "God" have for the relation of the Christian faith to other religions than Islam ? The unanswered questions just indicated make it difficult to do more than guess whether in our meeting with Hindus, it is implied that we should use the name of "God"—meaning, we believe He is God—for *Brahman* or *Īśvara*. Or we may ask, should we use the names of *Brahman* or *Īśvara* when referring to the Christian God in the Indian languages ? Perhaps when we turn the question around this way, we can see more easily that this is far more than an academic issue ; it is a matter of great practical concern for the Church in India at the present day.

The argument concerning the Christian use of *Allāh* is whether any number of apparent similarities entitle Christians to give the name of God to any other than the one revealed and now confessed as the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". But the problem with respect to the deities of other religions is more complicated. Is there between Christian and Hindu, "radical inconsistency within the very concept of existence itself as applied to God" ? Perhaps with respect to

Buddhism, where the obvious answer is No, the problem is still more complicated.

We cannot consider the problem itself here, but let us beware of any short-cut solutions, whether in the interests of "orthodoxy" or "tolerance" or "common sense". We certainly should refuse to be forced to any conclusion because "it would be fatal to all our mutual tasks"[23] to think otherwise. The "call to understanding" is not dependent on our first finding some kind of common basis between our own faith and the religion we wish to study.

Our aim should be to understand the classical expressions of Islam or Hinduism, and to project ourselves imaginatively into the actual experience of the modern follower of the religion. It is true we shall be able to understand only if we find "clues" in our experience which illumine the meaning of his, just as we must try to help him to an understanding of the Christian faith in terms familiar to him. But these familiar terms must remain simply "clues" ; if they become standards of judgment, we move away from the kind of understanding just indicated into the equally necessary but quite distinct area of theological evaluation.

The peculiarly Christian "call" to understanding comes, however, not at the point where there is the most obvious "common ground", but precisely where there does not seem to be anything in common, in those areas of another religion which seem utterly alien, or even repugnant, to us. We are called, in the first place, to *understand* that in other religions with which we *disagree*.

This does not mean that we are more obliged to understand the "primitive" tribesman than to understand the Muslim ; we are equally obliged to understand men of all other religions, and we do well to remember that the more Christianity has in common with another religion, the more clear and sharp are the points of disagreement. The possibility of our understanding followers of other religions and of their understanding the message we preach rests on the fact that the Divine Word has nowhere left himself without a witness and that there is no people whom He has not already redeemed on Calvary. But the necessity of communicating the Gospel rests on the equally important fact that there is no man, and no people, who has not resisted the Divine Word and thus become blinded to His

presence. There is therefore no one who does not need to be brought face to face with the Divine Word made man in Jesus Christ.

* * * * * *

"Dr. Kenneth Cragg's *Call of the Minaret* is more relevant to the Christian-Hindu conversation than anything I have yet read."[24] Because many readers in India share Murray Rogers' impression of Dr. Cragg's work, I have taken the liberty of looking at this book in a somewhat different way than the author intended. Is the invitation to encounter with Islam an invitation which can or ought to be repeated as a summons to a similar many-sided meeting with Hindus ? We can only answer with an emphatic *Yes* !

We have seen, however, that in order to decide whether we can extend the invitation to encounter beyond the Christian meeting with Muslim, we must reflect even more clearly and more extensively than Cragg has done on the grounds of such encounter. This reflection is forced on us when we consider the relation of Christianity to *all* other religions, but it is necessary even if we confine ourselves to coming into real meeting with only one other religious community, such as Islam. Furthermore, we find that the distinctive nature of the relation between Christianity and Islam can be seen more clearly against the background of the relation of Christian faith to all religious systems.

Dr. Cragg is quite right that communication is not a different dimension from theology,[25] but just for that reason we need to give attention both to "expression" and to "definition" of the Gospel.[26] We need to remember that all the dimensions of our relation with those of other religions are based on what God has done and is doing in the world, not on the measure of religious agreement which we think exists between us. But in so far as we do discover agreement, it is part of our theological task to indicate its ground, to seek to determine the differing relationships between Christianity and Judaism, Islam and the "religions of the nations".

In our encounter with other religions, we Christians in India face an unusual challenge and an almost unique opportunity. The parallels and contrasts which Islam presents to Christianity are in many respects opposite to those we discover

in Hinduism. Cragg says that "by the very vigor and cruciality of its objections, Islam compels the Christian to delineate Christ more deeply".[27] There are different questions that Hinduism raises which also force us to deepen our understanding and our interpretation of Christ. As we try here in India to present the universal Christ in a way which will be relevant to both Muslim and Hindu, we do so in the confidence that He who has given us the Word to proclaim is the same Divine Word who has already prepared, and continues to prepare, the way for His coming in this land and among this people.

Notes

1. Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 1956, pp. x-xi.
2. p. ix.
3. pp. 245-46.
4. p. 268.
5. p. 269.
6. p. 262.
7. p. 269.
8. p. 273.
9. p. 273.
10. p. viii.
11. p. 274.
12. p. 335.
13. p. 183.
14. p. 179.
15. pp. 272-73.
16. p. 180.
17. p. 181.
18. pp. 181-82.
19. pp. 36-37.
20. p. 75.
21. p. 289.
22. p. 302.
23. p. 36.
24. C. Murray Rogers, "The Content of a Christian-Hindu Dialogue', (*Religion and Society*), VI, 1, February 1959, p. 71.
25. Cragg, "Hearing by the Word of God", (*The International Review of Missions*), XLVI, 183, July 1957, p. 249.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 246.
27. *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 274.

INSTITUTE ON TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN INDIA

By Miss Elizabeth Fell

This Institute, which was held in Bangalore, August 10th to 14th, 1959, under the auspices of the United Theological College and the C.I.S.R.S., represents a new venture by the C.I.S.R.S. in its task of encouraging informed thought and study of new developments in the religious thought of India on the part of Christians working in this country, whether Indians or those coming from abroad. As can be seen from the list given below, delegates included Indian presbyters from various parts of South India and a few young missionaries, while students of the United Theological College and of the Missionary Language School were also able to attend. Lecturers included both Hindu and Christian scholars who had made a special study of the various subjects covered. Many students found it particularly valuable to be able to hear convinced and practising Hindus speaking about their faith : one can read so much about Hinduism written by Christians, but one received a much more vivid impression of the *sanatana dharma* from hearing it expounded by men who themselves knew it from the inside and had long been practising it. A list of lectures and the subjects on which they spoke is also given below, and a selection from the lectures given is printed elsewhere in this issue.

Beside the paper on the Ramakrishna Movement, which is printed here, Professor Sankaranarayanan gave a general account of *sanatana dharma* which was most illuminating. He stressed the basic monism of Hinduism—in the ultimate analysis what is is only One, though diversely manifested—and the fundamental non-difference of the *jivatman* or individual soul and the *paramatman* or supreme spirit. Realization of this and detachment from the things of the world and from the self are the only means of winning that release from the chain of existence which is salvation. Not all, however, are capable of coming to this salvation by the ways of knowledge, the *jnana-marga,* and so for others there are the ways of devotion and of works, the *bhakti-marga* and the *karma-marga*. These are not alternatives but complementary and by the three paths together one may attain salvation.

Other schools, however, lay particular stress on the *bhakti-marga* and several lecturers dealt with this from different points of view. Bishop Kulandran gave two lectures in which he examined the concept of grace as it is found in various different branches of theistic Hinduism, and compared it with the Christian *gratia,* which cannot be separated from the Atonement and the Cross. In the schools of Hinduism it appears that the *bhakti-marga* is only one method of salvation which a man may choose in preference to another, and here we are immediately back in the realm of *man's*

effort and initiative. This is quite different from the Christian doctrine of *sola gratia*, as it concentrates attention on man's action and not on God's, and perhaps it cannot properly be described as a doctrine of grace. A doctrine of grace, properly so-called, appears only to be found in one school of Vaishnavism which teaches *prapatti* or surrender as the *only* way of salvation.

Further light on this subject was shed by the lectures on Vaishnavite theology and the Christian attitude to it given by Bishop Appasamy and the Rev. J. B. Carman. Mr. Carman began by emphasizing the fact that the word 'theology' is precisely the correct one to use in speaking of Vaishnavism, which is nothing if not a theistic religion. This was particularly true of the great exponent of Vaishnavism, Ramanuja, for whom God is the fundamental fact of the universe. Ramanuja was a leading interpreter of the *Bhagavadgita*, which he viewed from a basically theological standpoint, and in his attempt to synthesize different strands of Hindu teaching he was following the spirit of the *Gita* itself. The *Gita* continues to be regarded as one of the most important scriptures of Hinduism, and particularly of Vaishnavism, and Mr. V. William spoke on the contents of the *Gita* and discussed some of the ancient commentators who had written about it. Many modern leaders, such as Vinoba Bhave, have also written commentaries on the *Gita*, and Bishop Appasamy discussed their work and pointed out how much influence they had on modern developments in India. He then went on to speak of the attitude of the Christian Church—it is necessary for us to make a careful study of these new movements and try to see in what way God is working through them and what His message is to us, since we dare not deny that He is still at work in His world and not only in the Church.

Vaishnavism, however, is not the only theistic school of Hinduism; and other lecturers spoke about Saiva Siddhanta and the Christian view of it. Professor Devasenapathi read a most illuminating paper on Saivism in South India, which is printed elsewhere in this bulletin, and also emphasized the contemporary appeal of Saivism, with particular reference to its respect for life and its teaching about a personal God of love. The Rev. S. W. Savarimuthu gave an account of various Christian scholars who have studied Saivism, and of their opinion of it. Saivism is still a force in the south, and, as with Vaishnavism, it is very necessary that Christians should try to understand what it stands for and what it means to its adherents. These theistic schools perhaps represent the best Indian vehicle for preaching the Gospel, and Christians should be able to know and sympathize with many of their deepest insights.

It is further necessary not only to be acquainted with the past history of religious movements in India, but also to keep up-to-date with what is going on today. To this end many of the speakers laid particular stress on modern developments, and some of the lectures were entirely devoted to events of the last century or so. These included two talks by Dr. Devanandan on some contemporary Hindu *gurus* who provide a good example of how Hinduism is being worked out in modern life. The Rev. A. E. D. Frederick dealt

with the Arya Samaj and some of its related bodies, which now seem to function more in the political field, though the Samaj itself is also a reformed religious body laying great stress on a return to the pure religion of the Vedas. Some of the political bodies which stem from it are aggressively Hindu, as opposed to both Muslims and Christians, but in spite of the Arya Samaj emphasis on *Hindutvam*, Muslims also have a share in the cultural heritage of India, and so Bishop Subhan's lecture on Islam also fitted into the scheme of study of religious movements in India.

Apart from the lectures there was also some interesting discussion, both in the official conference hour in the evening and informally at other times, and it is to be hoped that such discussions, particularly between Hindus and Christians, can be continued elsewhere, as the best hope of real understanding of each other probably lies in such informal contact. It is hoped that those who attended will be able to continue with some reading and study of the subjects put before them during the week, and also that other such institutes may be arranged, perhaps in other parts of the country, so that more people may be able to take advantage of the opportunity of learning what is going on in the country in which they are working.

STUDENTS REGISTERED

The Rev. H. D. L. Abraham	..	C.S.I., Brucepetta, Bellary.
Mr. P. N. Alexander	..	Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam.
The Rev. L. V. Azariah	..	Arogyavaram P.O., Chittoor Dist., A.P.
The Rev. J. Balasundram	..	Arcot Lutheran Church, Pennadam, S.A. Dist.
The Rev. A. M. Bhaskara	..	Union Kanarese Seminary, P.O. Box 12, Tumkur.
The Rev. C. J. Daniel	..	C.S.I., Woriur, Tiruchirappalli.
The Rev. T. E. David	..	C.S.I., Mission Hill, Marikuppam P.O., K.G.F.
The Rev. G. Devabhushanam	..	C.S.I., Jammalamadugu, Cuddapah District, A.P.
The Rev. D. H. Elton	..	C.S.I., Khammamett, C.R., A.P.
The Rev. L. Engelbrecht	..	I.E.L.C., Krishnagiri.
The Rev. K. L. Gill	..	C.S.I., Mission Bungalow, Hassan.
The Rev. Gnanandam	..	Baptist Theological College, Kakinada, E. Godavari.
The Rev. R. Hutchinson	..	St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore-1.
The Rev. J. Isaac	..	2, Mission Road, Bangalore-2.
Miss Z. R. Jacob	..	Christa Seva Vidyalaya, 7/2, College Road, Madras-31.

The Rev. L. F. Knoll ..	A.B.M. Theological Seminary, Ramapatnam, Nellore Dist.
The Rev. J. G. Marsden ..	C.S.I., Jammalamadugu, Cuddapah District. A.P.
Mr. T. C. Oommen ..	S.C.M. Office, Manganam, Kottayam.
Mr. T. J. Ratnam ..	Springfield, Narsapur, West Godavari.
The Rev. N. Sabhapathy .	C.S.I. Bommalapur, Kothalachinta P.O., *via* Siruguppa, Bellary Dist.
The Rev. G. Samuel ..	Gloria Dei Parish, Rajahmundry. East Godavari.
The Rev. S. Samuel .	C.S.I., Chickmagalur.
The Rev. R. J. Sleigh ..	C.S.I. Compound, Kavutalam P.O., Adoni Taluk, Bellary Dist.
The Rev. G. Soma Sundara ..	4509, St. Mary's Road, N.R. Mohalla, Mysore.
The Rev. Dr. Winkler ..	Lutheran Church, Sirkali, Tanjore District.

LECTURES

A Christian Appraisal of Vaishnavite Theology
—Rt. Rev. A. J. Appasamy, M.A., D.Phil., D.D.

Some Contemporary Hindu Gurus
—Dr. P. D. Devanandan, M.A., Ph.D., D.D.

Saivism, Classical and Modern
—Prof. V. A. Devasenapathi, M.A., Ph.D.

The Arya Samaj and its Offshoots
—Rev. A. E. D. Frederick, M.A., B.D., S.T.M.

The Concept of Grace
—Rt. Rev. S. Kulandran, B.A., B.D.

Vaishnavite Theology
—Rev. J. B. Carman, M.A., B.D.

The Hindu Understanding of History
—Rev. S. J. Samartha, M.A., Ph.D.

Ramakrishna Movement
—Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan, M.A.

A Christian Looks at Saiva Siddhanta
—Rev. S. W. Savarimuthu, B.A., B.D.

Modern Movements in Indian Islam
—Rt. Rev. J. A. Subhan, D.D.

The Gita View of Man and His Destiny
—Rev. V. William, B.D., M.Th.

NEXT STEPS IN ASIA IN THE STUDY OF "THE WORD OF GOD AND LIVING FAITHS OF MEN"

[We are reproducing below a section of the report presented to the East Asian Christian Conference last May by Commission III which dealt with the topic "the Witness of the Churches Within and Beyond Their Frontiers": This Commission met in 3 different sections and discussed the following sub-topics :

(*i*) The Missionary Obligation of Asian Churches ;

(*ii*) Asian Participation in the Study "The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Men" ; and

(*iii*) The Witness and Structure of the Local Congregation.

EDITOR—*Religion and Society*.]

I. Our primary concern in Asian lands is to witness faithfully to the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ. We are set in the midst of living non-Christian religions which today are surging with new life. Our task is to present the claims of the Christian faith in the conviction of its universal validity for all times and its specific relevancy for our times. We should be clear in our mind as to the relation of the Gospel to the world of other religions in which men live and have their being.

This demand forced itself on the attention of the Christian Church in our lands as a matter of pressing need at the IMC meeting at Tambaram. Since Tambaram the tendency has been to emphasize the revelation aspect of the Gospel as totally other, and discontinuous with other religions. This theological approach has been a needed corrective. But one consequence of this emphasis is that it makes it difficult if not impossible for us to enter into fruitful conversation with men of other faiths. Without such confrontation Christian witness cannot be arrestingly relevant and meaningful especially in our present situation in Asia.

Asian conditions have changed beyond all recognition since Tambaram. Modern Asian man is concerned with revolutionary plans for the remaking of society, for the realisation of personal values and the achievement of specific national goals in present history. He is searching for spiritual foundations for this new world in the making and he does not always find the needed dynamic of faith in the traditional religion of his fathers. Modern religious movements in the historic religions of Asia stand for two things—on the one hand there is indication of the crises brought about by the inadequacy of their traditional institutions and theological beliefs ; on the other hand, they represent efforts to recover the support of faith, by a radical renewal of their beliefs in terms

of present-day demands and needs. Religion and Society in Asian lands are closely interrelated. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has to be proclaimed as the good news of God who is concerned with man in his relation to other men, and to the world of things.

II. Therefore we feel convinced that today we need a new approach to our study of the Word of God and the Living Faiths of Men. This approach should be from the Christian understanding of the nature and destiny of man. In Asian Churches we suggest that prominence should be given to the following aspects of the study :

(*a*) The search for new foundations in non-Christian religions as reflected by the values that modern man in Asia accepts and seeks to realise.

(*b*) The Biblical understanding of man and society in comparison with changing non-Christian concepts as revealed in the prevailing forms of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc., in Asian lands today.

(*c*) The creative interaction of changing social ideals and renascent religious beliefs on each other, which make it compellingly necessary for us to study all Asian religions, including our own, with reference to Asian society.

(*d*) The imperative need for relating the insights of this study to the everyday life of the local congregation of Christians in our lands, so that they may courageously venture, in their patterns of life and witness, to steer clear of the perils of ghettoism, on the one hand, and the danger of syncretism, on the other.

III. With specific reference to the study document on this subject prepared by the Study Department of the World Council of Churches, we would single out the following issues as of special relevance to the Asian situation :

(*a*) The relation of the "once-for-all-ness" of the redemptive act in Jesus Christ to God's concern in the redemption of men of other religions.

(*b*) The ways in which God is at work in the non-Christian religions.

(*c*) Other religions as themselves "in a positive way drawing upon the redemptive activity of God, and, at the same time, negatively using God's power against God".

(*d*) The conception of man as under the grip of "powers" which prevent him from heeding the Gospel and reaching the decision for Christ.

(*e*) The significance of the eschatological view of the Gospel and its relevancy to the hopes created by renascent Asian religions.

(f) The Christian understanding of conscience and of "conversion" as in fact "a radical replacement of all other authority over man's conscience by the sole authority of Jesus Christ".

The Commission gave enthusiastic support to the proposal to hold a series of consultations in regard to this study with special reference to Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic and Chinese religions in our area, to be organized jointly by EACC and WCC Study Department during 1960, in preparation for the next Assembly.

IV. In regard to the Study Centres in Asia, the Commission heard with approval the work done in them since their inception. We wish to emphasize the significance of the work being done in these centres, and ask EACC to give them all encouragement. In particular we urge that the Study Centres take seriously the necessity of the study of religion in relation to society.

Means should be devised by which the work of the various study centres can be co-ordinated. For instance, the directors of the centres should meet in 1960. In addition the results of the centres' work should be shared and made available to all groups taking part in this study. The bibliographies prepared by some of the centres and by the Division of Studies of the WCC should also be available in the area.

Attention was drawn to the need of a fuller understanding of the modern Roman Catholic Church in Asia and it was agreed to refer this to the Faith and Order Committee of EACC.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Pearl to India—The Life of Roberto de Nobili. By Vincent Cronin. (Published by Rupert Hart-Davis, Soho Square, London, 1959. Pp. 297. Price 25 *sh.* net.)

There are many references in missionary history to Roberto de Nobili, but no full-length biography is available in the English language. Vincent Cronin has therefore rendered signal service in writing this story of this amazing Jesuit, with understanding sympathy and imagination. To Indian Christian readers this book is of special interest for it provokes discussion on the rationale and methods of Christian missions.

Born in an aristocratic family (September 1577), de Nobili set out on the long and weary voyage from Lisbon to Goa (April 1604), to do missionary work in India as a member of the Society of Jesus. In vivid language, Cronin describes the grave hazards of the long voyage which, in this case, had to be unduly delayed because of various mishaps on the way. This reference in the story is but one of many which show how much the early missionary pioneers had to go through, and with what courage they withstood these trials. Nobili began work on the South-West coast among fisher folk, where a congregation was already in existence. But his stay among them was not for long. He had other daring ideas. He wanted to penetrate the fastness of Hindu orthodoxy and make the Gospel known to the Brahmin. With this purpose we find him, as early as 1606, settled down in what was then an important centre of commerce and a reputed seat of learning, the city of Madurai. Here he conceived the daring plan of establishing the Church among orthodox Brahmins, and began devising ways and means of executing this purpose.

From the outset, as Cronin indicates, this concern of de Nobili for the caste folk did not appeal to his colleagues and superiors. Already there was established in Madurai a mission among the fishermen. The importance that de Nobili seemed to give to the Brahmin inquirer implied that he belittled the value of the outcaste convert. So it seemed to his senior colleague, Goncalo Fernandes, who never could see eye to eye with Fr. Robert. Matters got worse when the young enthusiast began to experiment with adopting Hindu ways of life, becoming himself a vegetarian, putting on the yellow robes of a *sannyasi*, applying sandalwood marks on his forehead, and even wearing a sacred thread for a while. From this to the next step seemed inevitable ; he advocated that converts to Christianity should not be encouraged to adopt the Portuguese way of life which at that time was disparagingly described as the customs of a Parangui. Nobili maintained that conversion to the new faith did not necessarily demand that converts should be uprooted from the cultural and social setting in which they had been brought up. Therefore he pleaded that caste customs be permitted to

remain, that converts be allowed to continue as vegetarians and retain such practices as religious ablutions, using of sandalwood paste, the caste thread and the tuft of hair (*kudmi*). He argued that all these were social and cultural values which had no real connection with religious beliefs and practices, and that therefore they could well be permitted within the Christian Church. In fact, he maintained that only if the Church was willing to permit these observances converts can be gained from higher caste groups.

This was not all. He became convinced that to gain a hearing from the orthodox Brahmin the Christian preacher should be able to speak convincingly in the hearer's sacred language. The evangelist should thoroughly master the texts of the Hindu scriptures in their original so that he can build on them a worthwhile apologetic. With this intention he himself set about acquiring an intimate knowledge of Hindu religious literature: This was by no means easy, because in his day there were no printed books. He had to learn most of what he had to learn by getting Hindu pandits to recite and expound for him the Hindu *darshanas,* and also to permit him the privilege of getting to know the Vedas, which in those days was the special monopoly of the Brahmin. It is interesting to know that Nobili was perhaps the first non-Indian that succeeded in secretly learning the contents of the Vedic texts. Thus equipped, de Nobili established himself as a *Muni* in his own right, as a *Tattva Bodhakar,* Teacher of Reality, and because of his aristocratic origin claiming to be a *Raja Sannyasi*. Inquirers began to come to his Ashram and slowly Nobili was able to make converts. But the first Brahmin convert, Sivadarma, we are told, was won after "eighteen months work during which the Sanskrit master had become the Christian pupil". It was slow going indeed.

The chequered history of the Madurai Mission during the period of Nobili's ministry makes dismal reading. Internecine wars and consequent instability of local government ; suspicion of his orthodoxy by fellow workers and the fickle loyalty of his own converts ; failing health and decreasing financial support to the work—all these were difficulties against which Nobili had to struggle, almost single handed. From Madurai his work spread out and it necessitated his travelling, always on foot, clad in *sannyasi* robes; to Cochin, Salem, Trichinopoly and Goa.

During these wonderings, Nobili found occasion also to evangelise outcaste groups. Almost like a mass movement among the Paraiyas is reported in the neighbourhood of Trichinopoly because of the conversion of Paraiya Pandaram, who had a following two thousand strong. "What the time came to choose a Christian name (for the Pandaram), Nobili could find none better than Muttiudeyan —he who possesses happiness—a name which other missionaries translated as Hillary", so writes Cronin. "And so Nobili, who had baptized Sivadarma, the first Brahmin of the Madurai Mission, now baptized the first Paraiya : a natural complement, for he had never intended to found a sect composed exclusively of an elite". In spite of these ups and downs, we learn that by 1630 the Mission

consisted of three self-contained centres : in Salem in the neighbourhood of Moramangalam, Sendamangalam and the villages near by ; in Trichinopoly, among both caste and outcaste folk, the latter shepherded by Hillary ; and in Madurai were also there were both high caste and low caste converts. By this time Nobili had been given the assistance of two other missionaries Antonio Vico and Emmanuel Martins.

In all these centres Nobili experimented with new methods of evangelistic approach. But these innovations did not meet with the approval of his fellow-workers. In fact it aroused their antagonism. A movement was set afoot to stop Nobili from pursuing his heresies. Unfriendly ecclesiastical heads in Goa decided to take stern measures. Serious charges of heresy were brought against Nobili. The matter was referred to the highest authorities in Goa as well as in Rome, and Nobili was called on to defend himself. This part of the story is well known, but only when one reads the graphic account of it all given in Cronin's book does one realise the excruciating agony of heart that this high-souled missionary had to suffer because of all this persistent and stupid persecution. The last days of Nobili were sadly embittered by acrimonious controversy and vengeful treatment. Although the Papal verdict was in his favour, Nobili was withdrawn from the pioneer field of his labours on the score of his failing eyesight and advancing age. For two years he was in Ceylon, and then shipped back to India, to find himself, not in the Madurai he loved so much but in Mylapore. There he lived on for eight years ; old and weary, but with his intellectual faculties undimmed and known alike to Christians and Hindus as 'O Santo Padre'. He died in 1657, when nearly eighty, and he was buried in the same place where, according to tradition, the first missionary to India, the Apostle Thomas is entombed.

What is of present value in this epic story of pioneer evangelism is in the lessons that we can learn from (1) his evangelistic method of approach which has come to be known as "adaptation" ; (2) his plea that a clear distinction should be drawn between culture and religion, by distinguishing prevalent social customs from strictly religious practices ; and (3) his insistence on thorough knowledge of the Hindu Scriptures so that the evangelist can build his apologetic on the doctrines with which the Hindu intellectual is conversant and in the religious vocabulary with which he is familiar.

First, with regard to "adaptation", Cronin claims; "Nobili like the early Christians was obliged to adapt himself : not as regards dogma—he never did that—but as regards Indian customs..... The thing to do was to purify harmless customs of any superstitious taint and, wherever possible, redirect them towards the true God : to bring Christianity to the Indians, not as a way of life imported by the Paranguis from Europe, but as the crown of all that was best in India. Acting on this principle, Nobili had to decide which customs were not essentially superstitious and could be tolerated". How far this statement is a true reading of what was in Nobili's own mind it would be difficult to say. But there can be no doubt

that Nobili's chief concern was to prevent mere customs coming between an inquirer and Christ—the *kudmi* (tuft of hair on the head) for instance. It is interesting that nearly three hundred years later in Madurai it will take some searching to find a *kudmi* among orthodox Hindus, not to talk of Brahmins! What does this mean? What was regarded in Nobili's days as distinctive of Indian culture is no longer regarded so. Today a man with a *kudmi* would be regarded not orthodox or cultured but out-of-date and "uncivilized". This issue of "adaptation" then obviously relates to things which are by no means permanent and lasting. If this be so why should evangelists be nervous and unduly cautious in this matter of "adaptation"? Customs are subject to a change, and there are other forces besides religion which bring about the change.

After a recent visit to Rome, John Lawrence wrote in a recent issue of the *Frontier* that among other things, "there is much talk of 'adaptation', which means finding the appropriate expression of the unchanging faith for the conditions of a particular national culture ..... It seemed, however, to be supposed that principles of 'adaptation' could be laid down by deduction from fundamental theology and that the application of these principles could be left to a separate department of pastoral theology". Lawrence goes on to observe that he does not believe that theory and practice can be separated in this way. Surely "deductive theology" needs to be continually tested and corrected by an "inductive theology" which starts from a situation and builds a theory from a number of actualities. This would not mean that "induction" should replace "deduction", but that both are needed. We agree. But Rome is right in making "adaptation" a primary concern of pastoral theology rather than of fundamental theology because what is retained of the non-Christian heritage in a convert's culture takes years of continued pastoral tending to be "baptized unto Christ". Almost every custom has indeed a religious origin in non-Christian lands and they are brought into the Church, when people become Christians. It is a mistake to think that "adaptation" is the simple once-for-all act of decision to permit certain customs as in accord with Christian belief and practice which is reached by both "deductive and inductive theology". On the contrary, "adaptation" is really a long-term process which may take many long years of patient effort to produce the desired result of transforming local customs, into "appropriate expressions of the unchanging faith". The mistake consists in stopping short of the decision to accept or to reject local customs, on the assumption that once accepted and permitted within the Church they become Christian, and that once rejected they stay non-Christian. Marriage customs, caste observances, food tabus, and the like may not in themselves be "appropriate expressions of the unchanging faith", but they certainly can be powerful means of Christian witness if in the corporate life of local Christian groups they can testify to the Christian faith of those who have "adapted" these customs.

Nobili was right when he insisted that the evangelist should make it clear that when a man became a Christian he did not

become a Parangui. Three hundred years have made a real difference in our understanding of culture as distinguished from religion. In India today it would not be altogether true to say that it is cultural difference which stands in the way of evangelistic advance. For one thing, the Indian Christian is not any longer culturally outlandish. For another thing, radical changes have taken place in the culture-pattern of the Hindus themselves. In fact traditional Hindu customs are all in the melting pot and a new culture-pattern is in the making, into which a number of what once were regarded as foreign customs are being incorporated. Is the present task of the Church, then, to distinguish and preserve traditional values in our heritage or to help evaluate them and actively co-operate as Indian Christians in the nation's quest for a new synthesis of cultures which can provide the basis for national unity ?

Cronin devotes a whole chapter to describe the dream Robert de Nobili had of a "Brahmin seminary". "Nobili wanted to train seminarists", writes Cronin, "Who, having preserved their Indian customs and their castes, would be respected by their Hindu countrymen, to whom they could speak on equal terms. He wanted his future priests to present Christianity, to the Indian people in their own languages, not in a jargon in which all religious terms were Portuguese ; to be well trained in Christian theology but also experts in the religion of the Hindus around them ; to depend for support and protection on their own countrymen, not on foreigners". What is significant in this scheme Nobili visualised was the hope he had of making the *Nyaya-Vaiseshika* schools of classical *darshanas* the bases for Christian Theism. Later Christian thought would point to the Visishtadvaita of Ramanuja as better suited. But the task which Nobili set for the Christian theologian in India still remains unfulfilled. It cannot be achieved until Indian Christian thinkers get to have a scholarly understanding of the Hindu classics and of Christian philosophical theology. Whether they succeed in winning converts or not, there is no doubt that by helping revive and reconstruct a theistic system of Hindu religious philosophy they will be making a definite contribution as Christians in interpreting the rich heritage of their past to the present generation of their Hindu kinsmen.

Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. By S. L. Karandikar. (Published by the author, 399/3, Sadashiv Peth; Poona-2. Pp 655. Price Rs. 18·00.)

There are many biographies of Tilak. This one is in some ways different from the others. It is certainly more authentic and detailed. The author has put in much labour and research in gathering his material over several years. Two sources on which he has drawn are confidential papers in the possession of Government both in India and in England, and the pungent editorials of Tilak in his Marathi paper *The Kesari*: Some of the information he has gathered is totally new. Although Karandikar has been personally influenced by the hero of this study—and at times his admiration borders on hero worship—it should be said to the author's

credit that he has succeeded in great measure to be objective, factual and direct in the presentation and interpretation of his material. As such, this book will long serve as a mine of information, not only with regard to the life and work of Tilak but as flood-lighting one of the most epoch-making periods in the history of India. It was a period which not only marked the beginnings of determined effort for freedom but also the beginnings of Hindu renascence which later developed into more defined 'Movements' of reform and revival.

Our intention in this review is to indicate how in the life and work of Tilak we see the foregleams of the new trends in Hindu beliefs and practice. Although Tilak was one of the earliest and most brilliant products of the University of Bombay, it is remarkable that along with a chosen few of his equally gifted contemporaries at College, he felt called to devote his life to the cause of education. They were quick to see that the immediate need was education. At considerable sacrifice they banded themselves together into the Deccan Education Society and established a school in Poona which later developed into Fergusson College. In the first ten years of its existence, the institution made such remarkable progress that it came to be regarded as easily the best College affiliated to the Bombay University, although it received little assistance from the authorities. This was a strategic move on the part of the young nationalist leaders. They were correct in their estimate that the youth of the country should be harnessed to the service of New India. It is not surprising that practically all the outstanding national leaders of Bombay came from this institution, fired with a zeal for service, imbued with veneration for their Hindu heritage, and courageous enough to make any sacrifice that their ideal demanded.

In 1890, after years devoted to education, Tilak decided to move on to a larger sphere of service. This was the field of journalism. If public opinion was to be created and the people awakened to a sense of national self-respect the best way was through effective journalism in the local language. Tilak, therefore, devoted all his energy to setting up the Marathi paper, *The Kesari*. Through its columns he was able to speak to the common man. There were three objectives he sought to reach through journalism. One, of course, was to create informed public opinion on matters of moment. The other was to awaken people to a sense of awareness of their Hindu cultural heritage. The third was to establish the freedom of the press, the right of the people to exercise judgment upon Government, so that justice and order is secured by popular acceptance and not merely as imposed by external authority.

Not a few of Tilak's generation had become convinced that a foreign Government can only be overthrown by violence. They had watched with disappointment the little progress made by the leaders of the Indian National Congress. It seemed to them that the policy of conciliation was mistaken. The independence of the country would not be gained through any doctrine of moderation and mendicancy. Therefore, Tilak and the men of his day became convinced

that if Swaraj was to be wrested from the British it could only be by revolutionary measures. The partition of Bengal gave the occasion for beginning this new programme of violent struggle for freedom. Tilak made the partition of Bengal a national issue. Through his writings he justified the use of violence in the campaign. But he also made it clear that the price for liberty was heavy, and that there were number of dedicated youth both willing and eager to pay that price.

Karandikar devotes a large section of his book to relate the circumstances under which Tilak and his group led the opposition against the Moderates and caused the split in 1907 at Surat. But the aftermath of this action was to bring the wrath of the Government on his head. Tilak was singled out as the leader of the Extremists and for various reasons he was arrested and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment in Mandalay. It was during this period that Tilak wrote his famous commentary on the *Gita*, *The Gita Rahasya*. In this work he sought to prove that the main teaching of the *Gita* was to indicate the superiority of *karma yoga*. Tilak was almost the first commentator of the *Gita* to advocate the claim that the central teaching of the *Gita* was a philosophy of activism. The influence of this interpretation of the Hindu doctrine of *karma* on Hindu thought since Tilak's days cannot be overestimated. It is obvious that Tilak's primary intention was to impress upon the Hindu mind that the fundamental teaching of the *karma* doctrine was not one of resignation to the inevitable but an active effort to better the circumstances in which one finds oneself at any time. However true it may be that the present was the outcome of the past, one had the present in one's hands to make the best of it for the future. Thus there comes into the realm of politics the dynamic of faith supported by Scriptural sanction. The doctrine of *karma* is restated as a call to action, and the new note of sacrifical service is struck. Also, while the Moderates talked about the benefits of benevolent Imperialism as Providential, we already sense the beginnings of the condemnation of Colonialism as 'Satanic'. But the revolutionary ethic of Tilak and his followers is founded on the principle that evil can only be overthrown by evil. The end justified the means.

After his release from prison Tilak started the Home Rule Movement and evolved the doctrine of Responsive Co-operation. Nevertheless the struggle for freedom was not abandoned, and to keep it alive it was necessary that there should be a popular awakening. It may well be claimed that Tilak was the first of our national leaders who saw the need for making the nationalist movement a popular movement, so that the entire people of the country were brought to active participation in it. Thus, from the very beginning of his campaign for freedom, Tilak found the "boycott" of foreign goods and the use of "swadeshi" articles effective weapons to bring pressure on a foreign Government.

But more than these, he was convinced that the dynamic of popular religious zeal was a potent factor in generating popular

patriotism. From Tilak's days on there has been a growing tendency to rally Hindu sentiment to this end. It was he that first instituted in Maharashtra popular festivals in commemoration of Shivaji and for the worship of Ganapathi. These celebrations were taken advantage of powerfully to remind common Hindu folk that Hinduism was the faith of their land and that it was as Hindus they stood together.

However well intentioned this programme, there was insidious danger of its resulting in reactionary movements. In fact in his own day Tilak came to acquire the unsavoury reputation of being a communalist. As early as 1891, almost at the beginning of his political career, Tilak had taken sides with the orthodox and opposed such progressive leaders as Ranade in their endeavour to get the Age of Consent Bill passed through the Legislature raising the marriageable age of girls to 12. Also, about the same time he carried on a vigorous campaign against Pandita Ramabai and her work among Hindu widows in Poona because he felt that she was really proselytising rather than doing rescue work. In later days, he always felt that the Moslem community was the one most serious deterrent to national progress, and he could never be persuaded to accept that people of other faiths in India could be patriotic citizens.

This was perhaps the one great difference between him and Mahatma Gandhi who was already becoming the accepted leader of the people about the time that Tilak was reaching the end of his political career. For in 1920 Gandhi's political philosophy of non-violent non-co-operation was already being talked about. But Tilak himself was sceptical about its practicability and success. There is no doubt that Tilak's political heir was not M.K. Gandhi but V. D. Savarkar, who at that time was still a political prisoner in the Andamans. But before long he came to be released, and it was he that continued the work of Tilak emphasising in the struggle for freedom those principles which came to be embodied in the Hindu Maha Sabha, on the one hand, and the Rashtriya Seva Sangh, on the other.

So that it may truly be stated that if the influence of Tilak persists in Indian political thought it is to be found not in the Congress, but in the Hindu Maha Sabha and the Rashtriya Seva Sangh. It is, therefore, difficult to conclude with Karandikar that in any evaluation of Tilak's contribution to national awakening in India, one must not fall prey to the temptation of describing the great national hero as an extremist revolutionary and a communalist. Later events do not seem to support this claim. Nevertheless the fact remains that in his day Tilak by his single-minded devotion, supreme courage, willingness to pay the price for liberty and close identification with the common folk played a significant role in the epic struggle for freedom. Valentine Chirol described him as "the Father of the Indian Unrest", but he deserves the more acceptable title of "Maker of Modern Hinduism".

Savarkar and His Times. By Dhananjay Keer, (Published by A. V. Keer, 77 Bhageshwar Bhuvan, Lady Hardinge Road. Bombay-28). Pp. 421. Rs. 10·00.

This biography is far too subjective a study to be of any value in helping the reader form a dispassionate judgment of Savarkar's contribution to Renascent Hinduism. That Vinayak Damodar Savarkar will go down in modern Hindu history as one who was largely responsible for the new self-awareness and militant self-assertion of contemporary Hinduism, there can be little doubt. But opinion will continue to differ whether this contribution of Savarkar was for the best in the long run. In the author's own judgment, however, Savarkar was something of a Messiah.

Born in a family of ardent patriots, Vinayak and his two brothers Babarao and Narayan grew up to be political revolutionaries, all later condemned to imprisonment for their views. Even as a student in Fergusson College, Poona, at the beginning of this century, young Savarkar took active part in local politics. His extraordinary gift for writing brilliant verse and trenchant prose in Marathi as well as his natural flair for oratory marked him out even in his youth as a fiery leader.

After graduating from Bombay University in 1905 Savarkar went to Britain on a scholarship to study for the bar. While there his main interest was to organize the Indian students in England into a revolutionary political party called Abhinava Bharat. Its headquarters in London, known as the Indian House, acquired the reputation of being a hot-bed of political intrigue, and was closely watched by the Government. During this period, Savarkar wrote his famous book, *The First War of Independence of 1857*, in Marathi. For nearly thirty years it was proscribed in India, although various editions of it in English translation were in circulation outside India. The shooting of Sir Curzon Wyllie by Madanla Dhingra, one of the Abhinava Bharat group, incited Government to suppressive measures and in consequence Vinayak Savarkar was arrested, brought back to India and sentenced to deportation to the Andamans in 1910. There is a remarkable story about Savarkar having jumped off the boat which was bringing him to India at Marseilles and daringly swimming ashore only to be caught by his guards. For a long time there was controversy whether the British police were justified in recovering their prisoner who had escaped from them into another country. In any case, Savarkar acquired the reputation of a political desperado, and because of it the treatment given him in the Andamans was unnecessarily severe and almost inhuman. Savarkar was given no facilities for study and writing. But by his courageous example he infused a new spirit into the other prisoners ; he taught them to read, secured permission for a library and promoted the use of Hindi instead of Urdu as "the second language of the jail office".

"In this cause the Arya Samajists helped him", writes Dhananjay Keer. "Savarkar's respect for Dayananda was high. He got the *Satyartha Prakash* read by his colleagues and co-prisoners.

He regarded the great work of Dayananda as a fearless and formidable exposition that teaches and implants the noble ideals of Hindu culture, elucidating the importance of Hindu religion as the national religion of Hindusthan." This indicates how Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader of later days, came to be influenced by the Arya Samaj. It was also in the Andamans that Savarkar became convinced of the *Sanghatan* (Community) and *Shuddhi* (Reclamation) programme of the Arya Samaj. He not only stopped the conversion of a Hindu convict to Islam, but also reconverted those who had lapsed from Hinduism while in prison. Reporting these activities, Keer writes : "Even a Christian of long-standing was reconverted to Hinduism ; later on several Muslim attempts were foiled by a eleventh-hour intervention or early precautions. The Muslims complained against Savarkar that he converted even born Muslims to Hinduism. Hindus realized now that Muslims could be converted to Hinduism.". All this has been stated to show under what unfortunate circumstances of acrimonious controversy and violent retaliation Savarkar came to formulate his concept of *Hindutva*.

After much agitation on the part of his friends Savarkar was finally released from the Andamans, brought back to India, and permitted to live in the Ratnagiri District, Poona, on condition that he did not enter politics, and go beyond the limits of that District. Savarkar took to active social work in connection with the Hindu Mahasabha. Among other things he carried out widespread propaganda for the abolition of untouchability and all caste restrictions in order to achieve the solidarity of the Hindu people. To this end he advocated the Arya Samaj teaching about *shuddhi* and *sanghatan*. In 1925, he started what he called pan-Hindu Ganesh festivals and went a step further than Tilak by throwing them open to caste and outcaste Hindus. Under the banner of the Mahasabha and the battle cry, "One God, one goal, one language, one country and one nation", he led a crusade in Ratnagiri for admitting the untouchables into the local Vithoba temple and also organized "intercaste pan-Hindu" dinners.

The movement spread, and one of the early visitors to Savarkar in Ratnagiri was the founder of the RSS, Dr. K. B. Hedgewar. "The interview took place in 1925", reports Keer. "Savarkar's monumental work, *Hindutva*, giving ideas of the fundamentals of Hindu nationalism and Hindu State had just appeared on the scene. Before starting the volunteer organization known as the RSS Dr. Hedgewar had a long discussion with Savarkar over the faith, form and future of the organization." It may well be claimed that the RSS owes its origin in no small measure to Savarkar.

In 1937 Savarkar was unconditionally released from internment in Ratnagiri. Henceforth Bombay became his headquarters. He declared that his aim now was to establish "a free, independent India on the bedrock of the Hindus, the national majority". He travelled extensively to promote this cause.

As President of the Hindu Mahasabha at its 19th Annual Session in Ahmedabad in 1937, he gave it a new lease of life as

a political organization. Dhananjay Keer devotes a whole chapter to a full discussion of the Hindu *sanghatan* ideology which henceforth dominated the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha. According to Savarkar "Every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this *Bharat Bhumi* as a land of the origin of his religion and the cradle of his faith." The claim is that *Hindutva* is much wider than Hinduism because what is basic to the concept of *Hindutva* is the sense of belonging to the Hindu nation. But it was made clear that people of other faiths could only be regarded as religious minorities.

So far as the Muslim community was concerned, Savarkar said, every equitable treatment which an Indian citizen could claim on an equality of footing with others in respect of language, religion and culture, could be given to them, but they should be held as suspicious friends for at least some years to come for their extra-territorial designs. One wonders how much the "two-nation theory" and the plea for Pakistan, which emerged about this time, was the outcome of the reaction of the Muslim League to the Mahasabha doctrine of *Hindutva*.

The latter part of this biography is a sorry tale of how as the Second World War comes to a close and the long-awaited hope of independence for India is realized, the gulf between Muslim and Hindus becomes unbridgeable. Congress concession of Pakistan is regarded as an act of treachery and cowardice by the Mahasabha leaders. Especially the conciliatory policy of Mahatma Gandhi is severely condemned and, in the end, it is only at the heavy cost of the Mahatma's cruel death that the entire country is rudely shaken to a sense of reality. Unfortunately once more Savarkar faces a court trial suspected of association with Godse, but is acquitted. For sometime the political activities of the Mahasabha and the RSS were suppressed by the Government. The ban is now lifted. But there is no doubt that the *shuddhi* and the *sanghatan* ideals to which Savarkar lent ardent support are still potent forces with which the secular state in India will have to reckon for many years to come.

BOOK NOTES

These notes have been compiled from various sources to give our readers some guidance about new books which are available and may be of interest to them. It is hoped to make such notes a regular feature of "Religion and Society". Suggestions about books which should be included and subjects on which information is sought will be welcomed by the Librarian, C.I.S.R.S. We are particularly interested in books published in India.

Essence of Principal Upanishads. By Swami Sivananda. (Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh), 1959. Pp. 204 + viii. Price Rs. 2·00.

A useful summary of the teachings of ten of the principal *Upanishads* as interpreted by Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Emphasis is laid on the fact that the saving knowledge of Brahman is not merely a matter of intellectual understanding but also involves some form of mystical relationship with the Divine, and a realization of oneness with it—*'tat twam asi'*. Such realization, however, is not seen to necessitate shutting oneself completely away from the world—rather one should serve humanity selflessly, for this form of works helps to bring release from the chain of *'karma'*.

The Upanishads (A Fourth Selection). By Swami Nikhilananda. (Phoenix House, London.) Pp. 406. Price £ 1 5 *sh.*

The fourth and last volume is a series on the major *Upanishads* translated by Swami Nikhilananda, who has also added a full commentary based on that of Sankara. He thus gives a useful guide to these basic Vedantic texts as interpreted by the Advaita school of philosophy, and explains some of the key concepts in its system. This fourth volume contains the *Taittiriya* and *Chhandogya Upanishads*, of which the latter in particular is regarded as an authoritative Vedantic text.

The Evolution of the Samkhya School of Thought. Anima Sen Gupta. Krishnaghat Quarters P.O., Patna University. Pp. 166. Price Rs. 6·00.

A detailed account of the development of the *Samkhya* school of thought—one of the traditional six *'darsanas'* of Indian philosophy. The *Samkhya* system is usually thought of as being essentially atheistic, but the authoress contends that there was also a theistic form of *Samkhya*, whose concepts are found in many other systems and forms of thought, as for instance in the second chapter of the *Gita*. It was the decline of faith and of the intuitive way of looking at the world, and the increasing trust in intellect and reason as the final authority which led to the more usually known atheistic *Samkhya* system.

Lectures on Bhagavadgita—(Vol. 1.) M. Rangacharya. (Educational Publishing Co., Nungambakkam, Madras 6.) Price Rs. 15·00.

The contemporary emphasis on the *Gita* as the Bible of the *Sanatana Dharma* has led to a positive spate of notes and commentaries interpreting it for the people of our generation. The lectures in this book were first published in 1914, but they can equally profitably be read today for a Hindu interpretation of the *Gita* philosophy of action. In this

new edition of the first volume the author deals with the first six chapters of the *Gita*, which "give not only the ground-plan of the philosophy of conduct, which is built up and expounded therein, but also the teachings bearing upon self-realization leading to God-realization and to the authoritative formulation of the ethical law of universal equality as constituting the most appropriate guide to the conduct of life".

The Bhagavadgita, as a Philosophy of God-Realization. By Dr. R. D. Ranade, Nagpur University. Pp. 321. Price Rs. 10·00.

Another collection, this time of recent lectures on the *Gita*, seen especially from the point of view of the mystic. Dr. Ranade discusses a wide range of commentaries on the *Gita*, from Sankara and Ramanuja to Gandhiji, Radhakrishnan and Hill. He deals clearly and sympathetically with the different points of view expressed by the various writers so as to give a comprehensive account of what has been thought and written about this most important Hindu scripture. Finally Dr. Ranade gives his own interpretation of the *Gita*, laying stress on the importance of mystical devotion as a means to a personal realization of relationship and indeed unity with God. This book will be a very useful guide for those who wish to know what the *Gita* has meant and still means to millions of Hindus who look on it as their most authoritative sacred writing.

The Religion of the Buddha and its Relation to Upanishadic Thought. By Bahadur Mal, Vishweshwarananda Institute, Hoshiarpur. Pp. 310. Price Rs. 4·50.

This book discusses Buddhism from the point of view of its roots in the traditional religion of the Vedas. The author gives a vivid picture of the situation in India just before the Buddha was born, in order to show how his teachings fitted into the social and religious pattern of the times. It is true that, as is generally thought, the teachings of the Buddha in many ways represent a revolt against the traditional religious forms and practices of his times, which had deteriorated from the pristine purity of the Vedic religion. It is also true that there are many elements in common between Buddhist and Upanishadic thought, and it is this common element that the author seeks to draw out in his discussion of various salient points in Buddhist teaching and their relation to the teaching of the *Upanishads*.

Philosophy of the Buddha. By A. J. Bahm. (Rider & Co., London.) Price 12 *sh.* 6 *d.*

Another detailed discussion of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism, based on exhaustive research into the original Buddhist scriptures, both in Sanskrit and in Pali. The author maintains that on some points the traditional versions of Buddha's teaching, especially those current in the West, do not correctly represent the facts as given in the scriptures. This may quite well be the case, though as is pointed out, since none of his teachings were written down in the Buddha's lifetime, it is not always possible to say with accuracy what his teaching was on any particular point. This book also gives a picture of the background against which the Buddha lived and with which it is necessary to be

acquainted in order to understand the significance of his life and teachings. From such a study of his time and teaching it becomes clear how much he owed to traditional Hindu ideas which were current at the time, and how far he rebelled against the established religion.

The Noble Eight-fold Path. By Ven. Nandisvara Thero, Maha Bodhi Society, Madras.

An exposition of the 'Eight-Fold Path'—the central doctrine of Buddhism—designed especially for the layman. The author has made liberal use of quotation in showing how the different paths lead on from each other, and it should be helpful for those who wish to discover the basic teachings of Buddhism, as well as for scholars who wish to refresh their memory of them.

The Religion of Ahimsa. By A. Chakravarti, Ratanchand Hirachand, 26 Napean Sea Road, Bombay-6. Pp. 227. Price Rs. 5·50.

At a time when the virtue of '*ahimsa*' is advocated on all sides and claimed by all parties it is appropriate to have a book on the religion which claims to be 'The Religion of Ahimsa' *par excellence*. The author of this book gives a clear account of the main tenets of Jainism, though adherents of the various schools of Hinduism may accuse him of making too many exclusive claims for his way of thought as over against orthodox Hinduism. The outsider tends to think of Jainism solely in terms of *ahimsa*, perhaps carried to what seem to be impossible extremes so that it will be useful to have this account of other features in Jaina thought to redress the balance. Philosophical students, in particular, may find it helpful to be able to compare the Jaina system with the traditional *darshanas* of Indian philosophy, and also with various types of Western philosophical thought as given in the concluding sections of the book.

Woman in Islam. By Malik Ran Baveja, Institute of Indo-Middle East Cultural Studies, Agapura, Hyderabad (Deccan). Price Rs. 6·00.

An authoritative work on the position of women in Islam, based on the teachings of the *Quaran*. The author, who is an expert on Islamic subjects, deals with the position of women in pre-Islamic days, when their lot appears to have been very unhappy indeed, and contrasts with it the place given to them by the Islamic scriptures. This appears rather different from the popular idea of Muslim women as being forced to lead exceedingly restricted lives and being debarred from any kind of activity outside the home, and it is salutary to have the scriptural position clearly set out.

Mahatma Gandhi: A Biography. By B. R. Nanda. (George Allen & Unwin, London.) Price 1 £ 15 *sh.*

This complete biography of Mahatma Gandhi gives a clear and factual account of his life and of the many activities in which he was engaged. Many of these are no doubt well known, but it should be helpful to have them gathered together in a consecutive account for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the history of India during this time, as well as to refresh the memory of those who know it well and themselves took part in the events described. The book begins

with an account of his early life and his time in South Africa, and then goes on to deal with all the events leading up to Independence and Gandhiji's part in them. The author concludes by giving his own views on the important events he has described.

Mahatma Gandhi, The Last Phase, Vol. II. By Pyarelal. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.) Price Rs. 20·00.

This is the second and last volume of an exhaustive work on Mahatma Gandhi's last years, and gives a detailed account of the events from February 1947, and of Gandhi's activities and the ideas which underly them. The author ends his story with an impassioned appeal for a return to Gandhian principles, which seem at the moment to be largely neglected.

Sarvodaya and Communism. Vinoba Bhave. (Sarvodaya Publications, Tanjore, S.I.) Pp. 40. Price 40 nP.

Sampattidan. Vinoba Bhave. (Sarvodaya Publications, Tanjore, S.I.) Pp. 48. Price Re. 0·30 nP.

Two books by Vinoba Bhave setting out his views on the ownership of land and property and the methods by which this should be distributed more evenly, with particular reference to the points at which his doctrine differs from that of the Communists. The key to this seems to lie in the methods rather than the ends to be achieved, as Vinoba would refuse to allow any force in working for social ownership of both land and property. In the second pamphlet the author explains *Sampattidan* in terms reminiscent of the current discussion of Christian stewardship in some churches in the West. The giving away of some part of one's wealth is seen as being as it were sacramental of the fact that all property is held in trust and is not really at the owner's disposal to treat exactly as he wishes.

Vino and His Mission. By Suresh Ram. (Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, Rajghat, Kashi, India.) Pp. 342. Price Rs. 5·00.

A new edition of a book first published in 1954 about the origins and progress of the Bhoodan movement by an active Bhoodan worker. This edition has been revised and enlarged and brought up-to-date by the inclusion of discussion of developments and problems which have made themselves felt during the last five years. The author explains the meaning of the various aspects of the Sarvodaya movement, such as *Gramdan* and *Sampattidan*, and shows how the aim of the movement is a peaceful social revolution.

From Socialism to Sarvodaya. By Jayaprakash Narayan. (Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, Rajghat, Kashi, India.) Price 75 nP.

A statement by one of the leaders of the Sarvodaya movement of the steps by which he travelled from a Marxian form of Socialism to the Sarvodaya ideals of peace and non-violence.

Separatist Movement Unmasked. By S. C. Chellaswamy. (Higginbothams, Madras.) Price Rs. 1·50.

The author discussess the demand in some quarters for a separate state of Dravidastan, with particular reference to the question of indus-

trial development in the South as compared with the North and to the language question. He argues that the separatist movements are both anti-national and based on unsound propaganda.

The Indian Heritage. By V. Raghavan. (Indian Institute of World Culture, 6, North Public Square Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore-4, 1956). Pp. 494 + lxxvii. Price Rs. 13·00.

This book, published by the Indian Institute of World Culture, is part of a UNESCO series of representative works of literature, and is an anthology of extracts from Sanskrit literature. The author has concentrated on the early phases of the immense body of writings available and has included many selections from the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* together with some extracts from the *Epics* and *Puranas*, as well as some important points from the *Gita*. The Introduction deals both with the selections which are included in the book, and also gives a general picture of Sanskrit literature so that it is possible to see where the selected passages fit into the wider frame. The author also sptaks briefly of the various secretarian movements in Hinduism, and their expression in poetry and art, and mentions the works of the saints who wrote hymns in the different regional languages. He thus gives a general conspectus of the Indian literary heritage.

The Christian Approach Series. (Edinburgh House Press, 2 Eaton Gate, London, S.W. 1.) Price 2 *sh*. 6 *d*.

A new series of short books which is being produced under the auspices of the Edinburgh House Press. The aim of the series is "to give an objective and sympathetic account of other religions with a view to promoting deeper understanding of them. The writer's aim will be to indicate the particular relevance of Christianity to each faith. There will be no attempt to evade the challenge in thought, interpretation or living". The author of each book gives an account of the faith with which he is dealing, and then discusses what attitude the Christian should take up with regard to the various points of special importance which have been discussed. Books on Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Communism have so far appeared, and the series will also deal with Islam, Animism and Humanism. The series should be a useful introduction for those who wish to know more about the other faiths which complete for the allegiance of men.

Cultural Forum : Contemporary Articles of Opinion, Vol. I, No. IV, 1959. Published Quarterly by the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi-2. Published in March, June, September and December. Annual subscription Rs. 8·80.

The word 'culture' is one of those conveniently vague terms which can be used to cover a very wide variety of subjects, and this magazine ranges over a correspondingly extensive field of interest. It should appeal to many of those who are interested in literature and the arts in any form. It may be that some, who 'know what they like' but don't pretend to any special knowledge of any branch of the arts, will feel that the discussion of criticism,

for instance, is above their heads. It seems, however, that it is for such people that this publication is specifically designed, as part of its general purpose of banishing the 'couldn't care less' attitude towards the arts of some sections of society, and increasing the level of artistic education in the country. It is probably true that without an informed body of public opinion and interest or the lavish patronage of a past age, the arts cannot be expected to flourish, and it is to be hoped that this magazine will be successful in stimulating public interest in the various forms of art and literature, and appreciation of new developments which are taking place. A Symposium on Criticism is one of the main features of the number of 'Cultural Forum' under review. Other items include a historical discussion of the place of English in India, which is of interest as providing a background to the present debates in the country, and also an article on the development of the film-making industry in a number of countries other than the traditional homes of the cinema. The regular features include 'Cultural Round-Up' and 'Everyman's Cultural Notebook', which give much useful information on a wide range of activities both at home and abroad.

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993–59 Printed at the Bangalore Press, Bangalore City,
by C. Vasudeva Rao, Superintendent.

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